

T E N .

Select Discourses,

TREATING

I. Of *England's* Guilt, Danger, and Hopes.

Word of God, *England's* Great Happiness.

II. Of eating the Flesh, and drinking the Blood of Christ.

VII. Of another Comfort, or the Acts of the Holy Ghost after our Lord's Ascension.

III. Of Wicked Mens fulfilling the dark part of the Scriptures.

VIII. Of Direction in difficult Cases.

IV. Of Early Piety.

IX. Of the Peoples Duty at home, when the Army is abroad.

V. Of the Angelical Happiness of Holy Men in Heaven.

X. Of Family Religion, or Blessing the House.

VI. The Enjoyment of the

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L O N D O N :

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TO THE
People of my Charge.

M^Y Heart's Desire, and Prayer to God for you, is that you may be saved. And in order to it I Preached, and have now Published the following Discourses.

Such as they are, Let them remain in your Houses as a Witness, that you have been under some Faithful Instruction, and Serious Admonition; and that if any of you Perish, it is not for want of repeated Warning.

I have Joy in those of you whose Conversation is according to the Gospel, and have endeavour'd to promote the Grace that is in you, and the Consolation you have received.

Others who live not as becomes Christians,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

stians, are grieving to me, knowing that unless a serious Repentance intervene, your End must be miserable.

May it please God to prosper what I have Written, to your Reformation; that I may Rejoyce in you all, which is the earnest desire of

Your Affectionate

Spiritual Guide,

Nathaniel Parkhurst.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE I.

England's Guilt, Danger, and Hopes.

A M O S IV. 11.

I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a fire-brand pluckt out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.

TH E S E Words are God's Complaint of Israel his People. He had known them only of all the Families of the Earth, Chap. 3. 2. i. e. owned them only as his Church, giving them his Statutes and Ordinances, Psal. 147. 19, 20. But notwithstanding such a Favour they sinned deeply against him; and He Corrected them by various sad Judgments, under which they remained incorrigible as may be seen in the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th, Verses. *I have also given you cleanness of Teeth, &c.* And then follows, *I have overthrown some of you, as God, &c.*

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It is God that speaks this, and yet saith, *As God overthrow Sodom*, whereas we would think it should have been said, as I overthrew Sodom. The like we have in *Gen. 19. 24. The Lord rained upon Sodom Fire and Brimstone from the Lord out of Heaven. i. e.* The Lord the Son rained Fire from the Lord the Father, executing the Father's Decree. So here, I God the Father have overthrown some of you, as God my Son overthrew Sodom, *i. e.* in a very terrible manner, and ye that escaped, escaped narrowly, *were as a Fire-brand pluckt out of the burning.* But still you continue your Impiety, and have not returned unto me.

OBSERVATION.

Great Judgments, even like that on *Sodom*, prevail not upon a sinfull People to bring them to Repentance. Thus it was with *Israel*, and thus it is with us. *England* is in this like *Israel*. Great Judgments have been upon us, but no general Repentance and Reformation hath followed.

1. In the memory of some now living, the Judgment of Civil War was upon us, when one Family sheathed their Swords, and one Neighbour his in the Bowels of another, and when some Families divided against themselves, and the Land was *Aceldama*

dama a Field of Blood : But this Judgment was ineffectual, and after it the *Filthy* were filthy still, and the *Unrighteous* unrighteous still.

2. The Judgment of Wars with Neighbour Nations hath been upon us Drinking up our Blood, and exhausting our Treasure, and yet we have not returned to God.

3. The Judgment of Pestilence hath been upon us when Thousands died in a Week, and many were scattered from their Habitations, and Trade died, and many Houses were shut up, and Terror was on every side; *and yet we have not returned to God.*

4. The Judgment of many Fires, and Burnings hath been upon us, especially that of *London* our *Metropolis*, in 1666. when the Smoak of that City went up as the Smoak of a Furnace, and Thousands were left without Beds or Houses, terrified and impoverished, *And yet have not returned to God.*

5. The Judgment of being in Imminent Danger of losing Religion and Liberty hath been upon us in a late Reign, when we feared Popery must have been the National Religion, and the Government Arbitrary, and our Houses, and Estates, and Persons at the mercy of Men whose Mercies are Cruel, while they think they do God Service in oppressing and ruining others. But where is the Reformation that should

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have followed that Danger? Hath there been an Oath the less, or a Curse the less, or a Glass of Wine the less! Or any thing less of Fornication, or Lying, or Slandering, or any other Impiety? No; We have not yet returned to God. The tide of Prophaness, Hypocrisie, Formality, and bitter Uncharitableness is not abated.

6. Very lately another Judgment, a very violent Storm of Wind hath been upon us, which carry'd Multitudes on the Sea in an Hour or two into Eternity; damag'd our Churches; over-turn'd some Houses, and shook our Foundations; rais'd us from our Beds, and put us in mind of Job's Children, bury'd in the Ruins of the House they Feasted in, *And yet we have not returned to God*, though this Judgment was like that upon *Sodom*, in several respects.

1. The Judgment on *Sodom* was very terrible and amazing: And so was this Storm terrible on the Land, and much more upon the Sea, *where many mounted up to the Heaven, and then went down again to the Deep, their Souls melting because of the trouble, reeling to and fro like a drunken Man, and at their wits ends, crying to the Lord in their Distress*, Psal. 107. 26, 27.

2. The Judgment on *Sodom* was very sudden and surprizing: And so was this Judgment of the Violent Wind. We went to our Beds the Night before in our usual hope of

of safety and rest, little thinking of being ruffled up with terrour in the Morning.

3. The Judgment on *Sodom* did its destroying Work with mighty speed, overthrowing them as in a Moment. And this dreadful Storm perform'd its Devastations speedily. The many Lives lost in it, and the Spoils made by it, fell within the compass of an Hour or two. *A short Work did the Lord make.* Famine doth its Work by degrees, Men pining away Weeks, yea, Months. And the Pestilence commonly lets Men live some Days; and the Flames are not so quick in destroying an House as the Wind when it over-turns a Building. Thus, in some respects, God hath overthrown some of us like *Sodom*; and it must be added, *Yet have we not returned to him.* There is yet no general Reformation among us.

This Accusation is true. The Judgments that have been upon us, have not refin'd us; our Dross remains. An Account is given of the Numbers of Ships and Men lost; of Damages sustain'd, and Spoils made by the late Storm; but I hear nothing of any County, Town, Village, or Family that is Reform'd by this awakening Providence. It is to be hoped, Good Men are bettered, but I hear of none *Bad* that are reform'd by it. And indeed nothing appears toward Reformation among us more than Her Majesty's Proclamation, inviting to consider the

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the Hand of God, and calling to Humiliation, and Amending our Lives. And may all Blessings from God be upon her Head and Heart for this. This should be follow'd with the Execution of the Laws against Profaneness every where. But this is a thing yet to come.

Yea, in some there appears an Opposition to Reformation. They are as Good as ever they intend to be, and hate to be Reform'd, and count a Reprover an Enemy, and him a Friend that saith, There is little or nothing to be Reform'd in Church or State; like *Korah*, that said, *All the Lord's People were Holy*, Numb. 16. 3.

The *Jews* were of this mind when our Lord personally visited them. He was a Reprover to them, and not mistaken in any thing, nor too sharp. But they had in their own Opinion no fault, and so amended nothing. And being hitherto unreformed, it may justly move Fears of other and greater Judgments, or of God's repeating upon us former Judgments. *Israel* being incorrigible, God threatens in ver. 12. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee*. And *Levit.* 26. 18. *And if ye will not hearken to me, I will yet punish you seven times more*. God's hand is not shortned, He can punish us more deeply. He hath more Arrows in his Quiver to wound us with. Let us hear and fear. Particularly,

I. We

1. We are engaged in a War for the securing of the Holy Protestant Religion, confirmed by the Scriptures, and Reason, and sealed by the Blood of *Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, Philpot*, and other Holy Martyrs; and for the preserving the Succession to the Crown in a Protestant Line; For preserving the Liberties of *Europe*; For preventing the *French King* from becoming the Western Monarch; A War in all appearance Just, and Wise, and Necessary, and truly Defensive. But yet God for our Sins may blast us in it. *Israel* was in the right, and *Benjamin* in the wrong, yet in two Battels *Benjamin* prevailed.

Notwithstanding Wisdom in Council, Conduct in the Officers, and Courage in the Soldiers, God can ruin our Armies, dissipate our Fleets, and bring the Tyrant over our Heads, and make us a ravaged enslaved Province, instead of a free and flourishing Kingdom. *For the Race is not always to the Swift, nor success in Battel to the Strong.* In War there is a Lot cast, but the whole disposing of it is from the Lord.

The Lord of Hosts can give our Enemies Success, who made *Israel* turn their backs to the Men of *Ai*, which brought Fear into the heart of a *Joshua*. And may not God justly, though our Cause be good, deny Success to our Armes, since we refuse to amend our ways, and do not keep our
selves

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selves from wicked things when the Host goeth forth.

Provocations at home may have a very bad influence upon the Forces abroad. Sacrilege and Debauches, and Contempt of the Gospel, and Oaths and Lies, and Blasphemies, and other Impieties may restrain the Courage of Soldiers, and bring an Infatuation upon wise and wary Captains. *Achan's* Sacrilege ruined a well laid Design against *Ai*, of which the Success seem'd certain.

2. God, though He hath made *England* as the Garden of *Eden*, and a *Goshen* mighty Fruitful, a Land of Corn, and flowing with Milk and Honey, can turn this Fruitful Land into barrenness for our Sins.

He can by an immoderate Drought, or overmuch Wet, or a blasting Wind, send a Famine of Bread, and give us cleanness of Teeth in all our Cities. And if He should, it would be terrible not to have Bread to satisfy Hunger, and to have a great price set upon an Ass's Head, or a Cab of Dove's Dung.

And this Judgment we may justly fear for our Sins; and especially for the Sin of Riot in wasting the Fruits of the Field by Gluttony and Drunkenness; more being sinfully lavish'd among us than would comfortably provide for the Poor, and in a great measure maintain a War.

And

And let not Riotous Persons say, What they spend and mispend is their own, and they may do what they will with their own. For though 'tis true, it is their own, and not another Man's; yet God keeps a Propriety in what Men have, and calls their *Corn his Corn; and their Wool, Flax, Silver and Gold his*, Hos. 2. 8, 9. We may surely fear this Judgment of a Famin of Bread, and have been within Memory upon the Borders of it in a considerable Scarcity.

3. God though he hath made us happy in the enjoyment of his Word Preach'd among us, no Land excelling us in this great Privilege, can deprive us of it, and send a Famin of hearing the Word of the Lord, and make a Sermon more precious than the Gold of *Ophir*, and make you wander from East to West, and from North to South to seek the Word of the Lord, and not find it. God can *remove your Teachers into Corners, that your eyes shall not see your Teachers, nor your Ears hear a voice behind you, saying this is the way, walk in it, when you are turning to the right or left hand.*

And to this God is provoked by them who slight the Word preached, and think there is too much of it, though the Holy Spirit by St. Paul saith, *Preach the Word, be instant in season, and out of season, who will*

not

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not come forth of their doors to hear it.

A Fair, or Market or Trivial sight brings them out, but the Word is not alluring to them. Now how very Justly may God make it be prized by the want of it.

And if God should bring upon us this Judgment, how uneasie would it be to hunger and thirst for the Word of Life and Salvation, and not to find it, though willing to travel for it.

4. We have now Health, and it is a long time since the Pestilence was upon us, near forty Years. But God can send that Arrow again. He can again kindle that burning in our Flesh, and render the Air infectious, and cause our Neighbours to shun us, and multiply our Funerals to more in a Week than we commonly bury in a Year, and make our Streets and Market-places green as the Meadows, for want of Trade and Traffick, and make all Physicians useles to us.

And if God should send the Plague, it would be very grieving, beyond our present Thoughts of it. And our Sins, provoke him to visit us in this way and particularly the Sin of Cursing, and wishing Plagues to others, and the Sin of ill using health, and breaking it by Intemperance, and the Sin of carelesly receiving the Lord's Supper. For profaning that Holy Institution many at Corinth *were sick and weak, and some slept*; that is, died 1. Cor. 11. 30. And we in like manner

manner too many of us profane that Ordinance, and may fear the like Judgment.

5. We are now in Peace at home, though in War abroad, but God can kindle among us the flame of Civil War, and the Kingdom may be divided against it self, and each County, City, Town, Village and House may be divided.

Thus God threatned *Egypt*, *Isaiah* 19. 2. *I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians.* And in ver. 14. *The Lord hath mingled a perverse Spirit in the midst thereof.*

Thus God set *Ephraim* against *Manasseh*, and *Manasseh* against *Ephraim*, and both against *Judah*, *Isaiah* 9. 21.

And thus God can do among us, let loose our Passions and Prejudices into Violence, to rob, spoil and kill one another.

And we provoke him to this, by our many and great Sins, and by not returning to him from our evil ways. And particularly those following Sins provoke him to send the Judgment of Civil War.

1. The Formality and Hypocrisy that is found in our solemn Religious Assemblies. We meet on the Lord's Day in the House of Prayer, and there present our selves, and bow before the Most High God, in an appearance of Owning, Revering, Seeking, Trusting and Delighting in the Almighty: In an Appearance of Acknowledging, De-
pending

pending upon, and Rejoicing in the once Crucify'd, and now Glorify'd Jesus: In an appearance of being really Christians and Holy. But many are far from being serious in the Worship of God, bringing a vain and careless polluted Mind to his Service; They are at Prayer, but do not pray, lifting up their Hearts to God.

They are at Confession of Sins; but endeavour not to be humbled.

They are at Hearing the Word Read and Preached; but have no delight in it.

They are at Thanksgiving; but without lifting a thankful Heart to the God of their Mercies.

They are at Singing Psalms; but not endeavouring *to make Melody in their Hearts to the Lord.*

They are at the pronouncing the Blessing, without an Heart open to receive it, without any lively desire of having the Grace of Christ, or the Love of God, or the Communion of the Holy Ghost.

They joyn in our Confession of Faith, without any serious believing any one Article.

They pray, *Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our Hearts to keep thy Laws*; and take no heed to order their Conversation a-right.

They seem to joyn in the Lord's Prayer; but endeavour not to hallow or sanctify the Name of God, nor that his Kingdom may come

come in their own or others Hearts. This is the way of many, and but few *Worship God in Spirit and in Truth*. Few come to his House with any Awe of God upon their Minds, or any Warmth of Love to Him in their Hearts : But Custom engages them to it, and it may be Conscience will not be quiet without this outside serving of God. Now this Formality in the Worship of God, provokes him to bring the Judgment of Civil War, and to mingle our Blood with our Sacrifices, and to disturb our Religious Assemblies by Armed Men. A Civil War will turn the Sabbath out of doors, and turn the Songs of our Temples into Howlings and sad Lamentations. And our Hypocrisy provokes God thus to deal with us.

2. Another Sin provoking God to send the Judgment of Civil War, is, our Uncharitableness to one another. We make nothing, many of us, of Reproaching, Slandering, and Despising one another; of throwing Ill-names and Characters upon one another; Love being fail'd from among us.

And how justly may God punish us for drawing out the Tongue against one another, by letting our Passions boil up to the drawing the Sword against each other. There is more of Offence to God in our Uncharitable handling one another, than many apprehend. This Sin is set too much

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below other Sins, whereas it is a Sin of an high Nature, and provokes God to bring upon us the Punishments of the Sword.

3. Another Sin provoking God to chastise us with the Judgment of Civil War, is Oppression; using our Power to the laying Burdens upon others. This naturally tends to bring in War; besides the provoking God to kindle it. Oppression procur'd the dividing the Ten Tribes from *Judah*, and made the War between *Rehoboam* and *Jeroboam*.

Thus being yet Un-reform'd, we may justly fear other Judgments; those I have mention'd, some or all of them. And if they all should be pour'd upon us at once, *England* hath nothing to say, but, *The Lord is Righteous; and to us belongs nothing but shame and confusion of Face*. Our Sins are so many, and great, and aggravated, that we must surely Justify God, and Condemn our selves.

We are the Vine-yard of the Lord, and his Plantation; and He hath hedg'd us in, and mightily defended us, and pour'd heavenly Dews upon us: But bringing forth foure Grapes, if all Judgments should overtake us, we can complain of our selves only, but not of God.

Consider what He did with *Israel*, first casting them out of his sight; and then how at length he utterly rejected the *Jews*. And what he hath done to the Churches of

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the *Lesser Asia*, and some others. And if we should come under Rejection and Ruin, we shall have nothing to say for our selves, having sinned much like them.

But it may be said, (and I willingly take hold of it) It may be notwithstanding our mighty Provocations God may yet spare us, and continue the exercise of his Patience and Long-suffering towards us, and still wait to be Gracious.

Quest. And what may incourage our Hopes concerning this?

1. The great Mercy of God may give incouragement to our Hopes of being spar'd. *He gives Food to all Flesh, and makes his Sun to shine, and his Rain to fall on the Just and Unjust.* His Mercies may keep us from being consum'd. *Lament.* 3. 22. And *though to us belongs only Shame and Confusion; yet to him belongs Mercies:* And it may be they shall be extended to us in the way of Patience.

2. Our hope of being spared may be incouraged by a number of Faithful Persons among us, and their Prayers. Some, like *Moses*, stand in the gap to turn away Wrath from us: Some, like *Samuel*, cease not to pray for us: Some, like *Noath, Daniel* and *Job*, are pleading with God for us; and this may incourage Hope.

While *Lot* was in *Sodom*, the Flames were restrain'd: And so while there is a-

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among us a number of *Knowing, Serious, Mortify'd, Holy-living, and earnestly Praying Persons*, we may hope Ruin may be perverted.

While *Hezekiah* liv'd, there was Peace and Truth in his Days. And while *Josiah* liv'd, the dreadful Judgments upon *Judah* were retarded.

The Life of one good Man, especially if in a Publick Station, may be a whole Kingdom's Blessing.

Jehojada, was such a Man : But no sooner was he dead, but things went ill with the Kingdom of *Judah* and Church of God, *2 Chron. 24. 15, &c.*

While there are some Magistrates like *Jethro's* Justices of Peace, *Able Men, fearing God, loving the Truth, Men of Courage, and hating Covetousness* ; While such bear the Sword, who bear it not in vain, but are a *Terrour to evil Works*, while some Ministers faithfully Instruct and Warn, and give an *holy Example* ; and while there are some People among us *Fearing God, and working Righteousness*, our hopes of God's *Sparing Mercy* may be encouraged. For such, though by many overlookt and despised, scorn'd and hated, are a *Defence*, and as *Guards to the Nation*.

• They, who like *David* give themselves to Prayer ; They whom our Lord pronounces *Blessed, The poor in Spirit, and*
Mourners

Mourners for their own and others Sins ; and *they that Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness, and the Meek, Merciful, Peacemakers, and pure in Heart, and who carry Religion to that height as to be reproached for it; They are a Bulwark, and stop impending Judgments; They under God are a Skreen and Shelter to us.*

Some are so blind and hardned, so Ignorant and daring through Ignorance, to say, It will never be well with the Nation till all Serious and Religious Persons are in their Grave ; whereas even they that hate them are the better for them , as God blessed the *Ægyptian* for *Joseph's* sake, *Gen. 39. 5.*

Amos was a Blessing in the Land of *Israel* : But see the opinion *Amaziab* the Priest of *Berhel* had of him, That he was intolerable, and *the Land could not bear his words*, *Amos 7. 10.* And instead of desiring his company to Instruct and Pray for the People, he endeavoured to get rid of him, *v. 12. O thou Seer, go, flee thee away into the Land of Judah, and there eat Bread and Prophecy there.* And thus the *Gergesenes* besought Christ to depart out of their Coasts, *Mat. 8. 34.* when he was the greatest Blessing that ever came among them. And they who tread in our Lord's steps, are a Blessing among us, and raise our hopes of being still spared.

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3. Our hopes of the continuance of God's Patience towards us may be supported and strengthened, by considering the marvellous Deliverances God hath indulg'd us, from time to time, since the beginning of the Reformation; which are an indication of his unwillingness to depart from and destroy us. The Language of our Deliverances is, *How shall I give thee up England? How shall I deliver thee Britain? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine Heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine Anger, I will not return to destroy England; for I am God and not Man, the Holy One in the midst of thee, Hos. 11.8.9.*

From the Days of the Reformation under the Glory of Kings, *Edward* the VIth. we have been a Sinful Provoking People; the Reformation from Popery being little prized by many in those early Days, and a Design formed ever since of bringing us back to the Romish Doctrines and Superstition. And this Design succeeded so well for the *Papists*, that after the effort of a House of Commons to carry a Disabling-Bill, they had the high gratification to see a Prince of their Religion upon the Throne; and the *Protestants* had the mortification to see the Idol openly worship'd in the Royal Palace, an Ambassador sent to *Rome*, and a *Nuncio* received from thence; one Bishop suspended,

suspended, and seven more in the *Tower*.

But notwithstanding our manifold Sins, and the restless Designs of our Enemies, God hath appeared much in favour to us, and given us almost miraculous Deliverances: as in 1588. from the formidable *Spanish* Invasion, and from the Powder-Plot, and from our later Hazards by the late Glorious Revolution under the Prince of *Orange*, since our happy King. Now these marvellous Deliverances speak God unwilling to destroy us.

Let us then hope God may yet be Gracious to us. And would we generally Reform and Amend, our faint Hopes might rise into a full Confidence.

Suffer then a word of *Exhortation*.

God in Heaven by his Word, and Judgments, and Mercies, and the Queen on Earth have called us to Fasting, Prayer, Humiliation, Repentance and Reformation; and let us obey these Calls, and every one turn from their evil way. And more particularly:

1. Let the Intemperate turn from his evil way, and cease the Sin of Drunkenness, that vile, brutish, unmanly, un-manning Sin; prize the good Creatures of God, and do not waste them, and your time and substance, and remember the Woes pronounc'd against Drunkards, and live soberly from Day to Day, and shun the Company that tempts you to this Sin.

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2. Let the Unclean turn from their evil ways, their Fornications, Adulteries, Incests, Sodomies, and Wantonness.

Remember, *That Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*, Heb. 13. 4. He will Judge all Impenitent Sinners; but especially, and severely these Unclean ones.

Think of the Flames on *Sodom*, and the Three and twenty thousand that perished for Fornication in one Day, 1 Cor. 10. 8. and do no more thus wickedly, but live in Purity.

3. Let the Profaners of Sabbaths turn from their evil way, and *remember the Sabbath to keep it holy, and call it a delight*; and neither Work, nor Sport, nor find their own common Pleasures on that Day.

But let them pray the Evening before for Grace to improve the Christian Sabbath; and awaking and up, let them begin with Prayer and Thanksgiving. And being Governours of Families, pray, and read the Scriptures with their Households, and charge them to observe God's Holy-Day, and then attend in the Congregation in serious manner, and then return, and speak, and meditate upon things Divine and Serious, sanctifying the whole Day. God expects it. And Sabbath-breakers have helpt to draw down the many Judgments that have fallen upon us.

And let not Servants take the Sabbath for only a Day of Bodily Rest, nor Labourers
for

for a Day of Bodily Ease, nor Children for only a freedom from School, but for a Day of Spiritual Rest to be employ'd cheerfully in the immediate Service of God.

4. Let the neglecters of hearing the Word, turn from their evil way, and if God doth not hinder, attend Sermons on the Lord's Day Morning and Evening, lest God be provoked to send a Famine of the Word upon them who think they have too much of it, and loath the Spiritual *Manna*.

5. Let Prayerless Persons turn from their evil way; and no more lie down at Night, or rise in the Morning without bowing their Knees to God, and making Supplication to him in a very serious manner, it being more than heathenish to neglect Prayer; for the Heathens prayed to their Idols.

6. Let Evil-speakers turn from their evil way; as Blasphemers, False and Profane Swearers; Cursers of others, or themselves, and they that dreadfully call for Damnation, Liars, Vain and Wanton Speakers, and let them from henceforth use their Tongues to the Glory of God; remembering, *that Men by their Words shall be Justified, or Condemned.*

7. Let Scorners of Religion turn from their evil way, and cease this sad provoking Sin, which is a sign of great blindness of Mind, and hardness of Heart. It is a great Profaneness, and a hellish Sin. Let them

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them that are guilty of it repent, set a watch, and pray against it, and never utter another Scoff at Religion in general, or any particular Service of God.

8. Let Unjust Dealers turn from their evil way, a Sin against Scripture and the Light of Nature ; a Sin shameful and odious, and requiring not only Repentance, but also Restitution, if there be power, and an opportunity ; and if not, yet confession to the wrong'd Parties, and begging them to forgive.

9. Let Mispenders of Time turn from their evil way, and prize, and redeem time, and improve it ; and not melt it out vainly and foolishly, but spend their Days in a manner that may be comfortably accounted for, partly in serious Reading, especially the Scriptures, and in solemn Prayer ; partly in diligence in their Callings, and a little of it in necessary and truly innocent Refreshings.

10. Let Formalists turn from their evil way, and be solemn and serious in the Worship and Service of God, and give him their Hearts in all holy Services, without which no Service is accepted with him, He being a searcher of Hearts. And let every other Sinner turn from his Sins, that God may be Gracious to our Land, and our Iniquity may not be our Ruin.

DISCOURSE II

What it is to Eat the Flesh of Christ, and
Drink his Blood,

J O H N VI. 54.

*Whoso Eateth my Flesh, and Drinketh
my Blood, hath Eternal Life ; and
I will raise him up at the last Day.*

IN these Words of our Lord and Saviour
Jesus Christ, we have,

I. Something mysterious, not to be understood literally, *viz.* the *Eating his Flesh, and Drinking his Blood.*

II. The present Happiness of Serious Believers in him: They *have Eternal Life.*

III. The Promise of a Resurrection to such : *I will raise him up at the last Day.*

First, Here is something mysterious, and not to be understood literally, *viz.* *The eating*

28 *What it is to eat the Flesh of Christ, eating the Flesh of Christ, and drinking the Blood of Christ.*

~~This~~ cannot be understood literally: For if we could literally, really eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood,

1. It would be against Nature, and a thing abhorred by us. The *Papists* pretend to do this in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. But it is also:

2. Against our Senses to believe it. For our Eyes, and Taste, and Smell, and Feeling, tell us it is Bread that we eat, and Wine that we drink, and not Flesh and Blood. And,

3. It is against Reason to admit this Opinion: For, supposing we could literally and really eat Christ's Flesh, and drink his Blood, it would not do us good; it were no profit or advantage to our Souls; for they are nourish'd by Faith, and not by Flesh and Blood.

Quest. What then is the meaning of eating Christ's Flesh, and drinking his Blood?

Ans. It must be understood of a Spiritual eating and drinking.

1. By Faith, or believing only.

2. Sacramentally also, *i. e.* by believing in Christ; assisted, and quickned by seeing and receiving the Pledges, and appointed Representations of his Body and Blood.

1. There

1. There is a Spiritual eating the Flesh, and drinking the Blood of Christ by Faith, or believing only, without the help of the Lord's Supper. And this is here intended; and not eating and drinking Christ Sacramentally: For the Lord's Supper was not yet Instituted when Christ spake this.

That then which is intended by eating Christ's Flesh, and drinking his Blood, is believing in him; and particularly, as a Sacrifice for our Sins, *wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities.*

Believing in Christ, which is most eminently the work which God requires of us, *John 6. 29.* is variously expressed in the Scriptures, sometimes by coming to Christ, *Matth: 11. 28. Come unto me, i. e. believe in me, you that labour, and are heavy laden;* burdened with Sin, through fear of God's Wrath due to Sin, and through grief for having offended so good a God, *and I will give you rest.*

In St. *John 1. 12.* it is exprest by receiving Christ; *To as many as received him, entertained him, professed him, really depended on him for Salvation, he gave power right or priviledge, to become the Sons of God: even to them that believe on his Name.*

In *Rom. 13. 14.* It is exprest by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ; intimating, that we are naked without Righteousness, and that

30 *What it is to eat the Flesh of Christ,*
that none but Christ's Righteousness is indeed sufficient to cover, and make us meet to appear before a perfectly Holy God.

And here it is exprest by eating Christ's Flesh, and drinking his Blood. And that this intends believing in him, is evident by the same Promise being made to eating and believing, *viz.* the Promise of Eternal Life, and of a Resurrection.

Quest. But why is believing in Christ exprest by eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood? There must surely be something of Congruity in the Expression, some Act of the Soul in believing correspondent to the Bodily Act of Eating and Drinking.

Ans. Surely, believing in Christ is thus exprest to clear the Notion of truly believing in him, as beyond a meer professing Faith in him. We must not only profess Faith in Christ with our Tongues; but our Souls must bring him near, and feed upon him by serious Thoughts and Meditations, and lively Acts of trusting in him.

And the Correspondent Act, in believing in Christ, to eating and drinking is this: In believing in Christ we should be affected toward Christ as we are toward our Food; which may be illustrated thus:

1. Food is apprehended necessary; and indeed we cannot live without it. And we should so believe in Christ as to count him
needful,

needful, seeing our selves lost and undone without him, utterly unable to stand before God in our best Righteousness, without the sprinkling of his Blood, and the imputation of his most perfect Righteousness.

He is absolutely needful to us in the matter of Salvation. And therefore while Men think they can shift without him, they do not seriously believe in him, and depend upon him, but upon their own Works, or God's general Goodness. And this is the way of them who apprehend not themselves lost in *Adam*; they think they might by moral Righteousness have been saved, though Christ had not dy'd for Sinners. But this is another Gospel than that we have received from Christ and the Apostles.

2. Food being needful upon that account, it is precious. And we should so believe in Christ, as highly to esteem him; as the Apostle, who *counted all things loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of him*, Philip. 3. 8. In the Language of the Church, Christ should be to us, *The Chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely*. And all the Wealth, Honours, and Pleasures of the World, in comparison of him, should be to us as Dross and Dung, though in themselves they are valuable things of a lower kind, and being well used will turn to good account *in the great Day of the Lord*.

3. Food is that we have a strong Appetite

32 *What it is to eat the Flesh of Christ,*
tite to, and Desire after. Hunger puts Men
upon the greatest Hardships ; and they ex-
pose their Lives, if need be, for Bread.
And we should so believe in Christ as to
have most earnest desires after him, being
satisfy'd with nothing less than him ; not
with Corn and Wine, or Mountains of
Gold, or Kingdoms ; but saying, *None but*
Christ, none but Christ.

4. Food is nourishing and strengthneth.
And Christ believed in, in serious manner,
communicates Strength to Believers, ena-
bling them to the sincere discharge of their
Duties to God and Men. Such is the cor-
respondence between the Expression and the
Thing intended, *viz.* Serious believing in
Christ. And so there is a Spiritual eating
the Flesh, and drinking the Blood of Christ
by Faith or Believing only, without the
help of the Lord's Supper. So that we
may daily eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood
in Reading, or Prayer, or Meditation, or
in godly Conference, if in these things a se-
rious Faith in Christ be moving and act-
ing in our Hearts. And thus upon our
Beds in Night Meditations upon Christ,
or sittin in the House, or walking by the
Way, &c. may eat the Flesh, and drink the
Blood of our Lord.

We may have this Repast and Entertain-
ment, and be at this heavenly Feast and
Banquet whenever we shall turn our
Thoughts

Thoughts to meditate upon our Redeemer; especially, as Dying and Sacrificed for us.

Whensoever we apprehend our need of him, and have a raised Esteem of him, and strong Desires after him, and his Love and Salvation by him, and are strengthened by him to the discharge of our Duty, we then Spiritually feed upon him, and eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood.

§. There is a Spiritual eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood of Christ Sacramentally, *i. e.* by a serious believing in Him, assisted and quickned by seeing and receiving the Pledges, and appointed Representations of his Body broken, and his Blood shed in the Lord's Supper.

The sight and receiving of these Pledges, helps our Faith and Affections.

Quest. But why should we come to the Lord's Supper, if we may eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of Christ by believing only?

Ans. We come to the Lord's Supper, because our Lord requires it, and because it helpeth Faith and Affection; not by any thing in the thing it self, but only by virtue of the Institution of Christ: For otherwise, the Popish way of using a Crucifix, *i. e.* the Image or Picture of our Saviour upon the Cross, is much more proper in the nature of the thing to move our Affections,

34 *What it is to eat the Flesh of Christ,*
than the Bread and Wine in the Holy Sacrament. Nothing seemeth more remote and distant from promoting an holy frame of Mind, a warm acting of Faith in, and Love to our Redeemer, than a piece of Bread broken, and Wine poured out. And yet serious Believers find themselves affected by these things, Christ blessing, putting life into, and making effectual his own Ordinance.

Quest. But if in the nature of the thing, a Crucifix is more proper to move Devotion and Affection, why may we not use a Crucifix to this purpose in our Closets, Houses, and Churches? And why were Crucifixes in the beginning of the Reformation pulled down, and thrown out of the Church as an Abomination.

Ans. We may not make use of Crucifixes, and in the beginning of the Reformation, they were thrown out of Churches as Detestable.

1. Because they were Man's Invention, and not God's Appointment, not Christ's Ordinance, and stood only on the lame Foot of Tradition, without any Scripture Foundation.

2. Because of the danger of Idolatry. For while Men look upon a Crucifix to help Devotion and the moving of Affections towards the once Crucify'd Jesus, there is danger of thinking Christ present in it, and
of

of inclining and bowing down to, or reverentially before the Image or Picture; which is flat Idolatry, and condemned by the Second Commandment. And if this be not Idolatry, we must excuse from this Sin the Worshippers of the Molten Calf in the Wilderness, and them who bowed down before the Calves in *Dan* and *Bethel*, *Jehovah* being designedly to be Worshipped in, or by them.

Such is the Reason of rejecting the use of a Crucifix to help Devotion. And the help to it in the Lord's Supper depends purely upon a Divine Institution; and therefore we attend upon it, viz. as a help, a Divinely appointed help to Faith first, and then to Affection.

And therefore the Chief thing we should endeavour in coming to the Lord's Supper, is to move, excite, and actuate our Faith in Christ, expecting aid therein by seeing and receiving the Pledges and Representations of his Body and Blood in the Sacrament. And that Person is rightly and duly imployed at the Lord's Supper, who fully and seriously believes in Jesus as a Sacrifice for his Sins, atoning and satisfying for his Offences, and is then in the serious remembering and considering of these things; he Spiritually eats the Flesh, and drinks the Blood of Christ; his Eye seeth Bread and Wine, and his Hand receiveth nothing more, and nothing more goeth into his Mouth;

36 *What it is to eat the Flesh of Christ,*
but his Soul by Faith sees, takes, and receives, and feeds upon Christ Crucify'd as broken and bleeding for him.

And though he did Spiritually eat the Flesh, and drink the Blood of Christ before he received the Lord's Supper, yet he doth it in the Lord's Supper in another and appointed manner, and with an aid to his Faith peculiar to that Ordinance.

Thus Faith or believing in Christ is the principal thing to be attended to in our receiving the Lord's Supper; for it is by Faith and not by the Mouth that we eat the Flesh, and drink the Blood of Christ.

But though Faith is the chief thing to be moved and acted in receiving the Lord's Supper, yet Faith there should not be alone, nor will it be alone, if we are serious in believing in Christ, but will certainly be attended with these following things.

1. With Humiliation for Sin, and Repentance. If we seriously believe in Christ as a Sacrifice for our Sins, we shall surely reflect upon our Sins, be humbled for them, and hate them, and turn from them. If looking upon, and receiving the Pledges of our Lord's Body and Blood, our Faith is moved in a lively manner to apprehend the Son of God suffered and bled to Redeem us from the Wrath of God, and the Torments of Hell, deserved by our Sins; can we forbear

bear grieving for, and hating, and turning away from our Sins.

And if our Faith be not attended with some serious Humiliation for our Sins, it is not serious and alive, but only pretended.

If any one persisting impenitently in either Intemperance, or Uncleaness, or Ignorance, or Hypocrisy, and Formality, saith he believes Christ dy'd to deliver him from the Wrath of God deserved by his Sins, and from the Hell he is in danger of, his Faith is only pretended; he is not serious in so believing.

No Impenitent Sinner is a serious Believer. That Faith that is not strong enough to move some real Humiliation and Repentance, is not lively, not alive; but only the shew and shadow of Faith.

2. Serious Faith will not be alone at the Lord's Supper, nor any where else; but will be attended with Love to the Father and Christ in its Actings. And how can it be otherwise?

If we seriously believe God the Father sent his well-beloved Son to be a Propitiation for our Sins, and that the Eternal Son of God came willingly, and was made a Sacrifice and a Curse in Dying for us, Can we forbear moving our selves to Love and Delight in the Father and Son? And finding our Love much less than it should be,

38 *What it is to eat the Flesh of Christ,*
we shall be grieved that we cannot Love
the Father and Christ much more.

And therefore they that are not real Lo-
vers of God and Christ, have only the
pretence, shew, and shadow of Faith.

3. Serious Faith in Christ will not be
alone, but attended with sincere Obedience,
real Holiness, and some considerable Refor-
mation in Heart and Life, in Actions,
Words and Thoughts.

And how can it be otherwise?

Can we stand by a serious Believing, in
the view of the Son of God Dying and
Bleeding for our Sins, to procure Pardon
for them, and forbear to *deny Ungodliness
and worldly Lusts*; and not resolve to dedi-
cate and devote our selves to God and
Christ, to live in Holiness and new Obedi-
ence to both?

Surely, such a sight must move us to
present to God and our Saviour *our Bodies
and Souls, a living Sacrifice, holy, and ac-
ceptable to God, which is our reasonable
Service.*

They therefore are not serious Believers,
who can indulge Sin, open or secret, of
the Hand, or Lip, or Heart.

Let us then, if we pretend Faith in Christ,
put on serious and steady fix'd Purposes in
the Strength of God, to live a Christian
Life; a Life according to Christian Rules,
and Christ's Example, not willingly omit-
ting

ting any part of our Christian Duty for fear of Men, or love to them,

Our Infirmities, upon Confession and real Repentance, God in Christ, and for his sake will pardon. But if we willingly omit any Duty in course, we make another Rule; and this the Law-giver, the Holy God will not endure.

When we endeavour the whole of our Duty, and fail in part of it through Infirmary, God will not charge the Failings upon us. But if we endeavour not the whole of known Duty, but only so much as we judge our Quality, or Trade, or Friends, or Constitution will bear, this God will not endure; for this is making another Law or Rule, and reflects upon God, as if He were not Wise enough to make a Rule, but we must mend it, and soften it.

Let us then imploring Divine Help, put on a Resolution, since we believe in Christ, to honour his Name, and adorn his Gospel by endeavouring faithfully to live by the Christian Rule in the Holy Scriptures, and in the Imitation of our Redeemer, *who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from Sinners*, while he was here and Convers'd among them.

And if we are humbled and penitent, and Lovers of God and Christ, and live in sincere Obedience to the Laws of God, and our blessed Lord and Redeemer, then our

40 *What it is to eat the Flesh of Christ,*

Faith in Christ is a living serious Faith, and by it we Spiritually eat the *Flesh*, and drink the *Blood of Christ*, and have *Eternal Life*, which is the

Second thing observable in the words, viz: the present Happiness of them, who eat the *Flesh* and drink the *Blood of Christ*, or seriously believe in him. They have *Eternal Life*, or *Glory*, or *Happiness*. But against it there is this Objection :

They have not the possession of *Eternal Life*, they are not yet in *Heaven*, but in a *Pilgrimage*, not at home in their Father's House ; they are yet in a *War*, and not fully victorious, and not yet triumphing and Crowned.

They are yet Labouring, Fighting, Wrestling, Praying, Confessing, Mourning at times, Tempted, Afflicted, and all Tears are not yet wiped away from their Eyes.

They have yet sometimes their Doubts, and Fears, and Grievs: How then have they *Eternal Life*? They shall have it ; the Promise of it is firm ; But how can they be said to have it already ?

Ans. 1. They have *Eternal Life* in the Seeds and Beginnings of it. Their Sanctification, new Nature, Heart and Spirit, their Privileges of Pardon, Adoption, Justification, and Peace with God ; and their Fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ; their Spiritual Graces and Joys are the

the beginnings of Eternal Life: Grace is Glory begun, and Glory is Grace perfected.

As a Child is call'd a Man, and a Plant a Tree; and as the first Morning Light is call'd Day; so serious Believers may be said to *have Eternal Life*; and as we say, A Field of Wheat, when it is only in the Blade.

2. Serious Believers *have Eternal Life* in the earnest of it; the Holy Spirit in, and Acting them, Illuminating, Sanctifying, Assisting, Supporting and Comforting them, helping their many Infirmities, Sealing them, and Dwelling in them, is the Earnest of Eternal Life.

3. Serious Believers *have Eternal Life, i.e.* they are as sure of it as if they had it in possession. Thus we say, a young Heir hath an Estate of Hundreds a Year, though under Guardians, and not possesst of it, because his Title is sure. They cannot be defeated of it, and therefore may be said to *have Eternal Life*. God is Faithful, who hath given them the promise of it; Christ is Powerful who undertakes to bring them to it; the Holy Spirit is Almighty, who is concern'd in qualifying them for it; the Covenant made with them concerning it, is in all things ordered and sure; and therefore they may be said to have it.

O the Happiness of serious Believers, of
Holy.

42 *What it is to eat the Flesh of Christ,*
Holy-living Christians! How much more
Happy are they than the Ungodly?

The Ungodly have no Beginnings, nor
Earnest, nor Assurance of, nor Title to
Eternal Life, but lie in perpetual danger
of sinking into Eternal Misery.

They may prosper in this World, and
have Health, Wealth, Honour, and Pow-
er over others. This is their overt outside
Condition, admir'd by themselves, and en-
vyed by some others. But look nearly, and
their Condition is black and sad, having
no Title to Eternal Life.

Their Prosperity is a glittering Misery,
like the Sun-shine of the Morning in which
God rain'd Fire and Brimstone upon *Sodom*
and *Gomorrhah*.

The most Glorious and Prosperous a-
mong the Ungodly, are like the Royal
Slave, and like Prisoners in Chains of Sil-
ver, and Fetters of Gold. Their outside
Condition is charming; but look narrowly,
and their State is dismal and deplorable, in
that they have no Title to Eternal Life.

Obj. But such perhaps may say, You
think thus of us, but we think otherwise.

Ans. It is not my Thought only, but the
Holy Scripture's Affirmation, that you have
no Title to Eternal Life: You then are not
the Happy Men; but the Holy, and by
you despised, they are Happy. The un-
erring

erring Mouth of the Eternal Son of God
faith, they *have Eternal Life.*

You then who are Serious Believers and
Holy-living Christians, know and believe
and consider how happy you are, and re-
joyce in it.

It may be you have not Wealth, nor
Honour, nor Health, nor Friends, or but
few; but you *have Eternal Life.* You
have Labours in watching your Hearts,
and Tongues, and Hands; but *Be not wea-
ry in well-doing; you shall reap in due season;
if you faint not:* You shall have, yea you
have Eternal Life.

You are engaged in Mortification; you
are in a War against the potent Enemies of
your Peace and Safety, Propriety and Pri-
viledges, the Devil, the World, and the
Flesh, with whom you must make no
Peace, nor Truce: But be not discourag-
ed, for you *have Eternal Life.*

You have very grievous Infirmities, and
Remains of Sin, and complain as the Apo-
stle in *Rom. 7.* That sometimes *to will is
present with you, but how to perform you find
not. And the good you would, you do not;
but the evil you hate, you do.* Thus you
complain, when Innocent in the Opinion
of others, who know your Conversation,
and when you are in your greatest watch-
fulness, and can appeal to God that you do
not wickedly depart from him. The wan-
derings

44 *What it is to eat the Flesh of Christ.*

derings of your Thoughts in Prayer, and the dulness of your Minds when you labour to be fervent, move the mentioned Complaints. But be not dismay'd, for you *have Eternal Life.*

Put on Strength, Courage and Joy; keep up your Spirits by Faith and Hope, for you *have Eternal Life.* And envy no Sinner's Power, Wealth, Honour, Pleasure or Ease, you have better than all these together, even *Eternal Life.*

Are you much grieved, and over-troubled, as *Jonadab* said to *Amnon*, 2 Sam. 13. 5. *Why art thou, being the King's Son, so lean?* I may say to you, Why so dejected, when you *have Eternal Life?* Lift up your Heads, incourage your Hearts, and go out of deep Mourning, since you *have Eternal Life.*

Thirdly Here is a Promise of Resurrection to them that eat the Flesh, and drink the Blood of Christ, to serious Believers in him, *I will raise him up at the Last Day.*

I, not excluding the Father or the Holy Ghost: For the Father raiseth the Dead, and *the Spirit quickneth the mortal Body*, Rom. 8. 11. but Christ is principal in this matter, being deputed thereunto in our Nature.

But it may be said, what Priviledges or Happiness is this, when the Ungodly shall be raised, the *Unjust as well as the Just*, Acts 24. 15. True; But there is this difference,

ference, *the Ungodly rise to shame*, Dan. 12. 2. to endure in their Bodies Misery and Torment ; but serious Believers are raised to be Glorious and Happy, even in their Bodies. They shall not only be Happy in their Souls upon dying, *present with the Lord*, 2 Cor. 5. 8. *In Paradise*, Luke 23. 43. but their Bodies shall be raised, and *put on Incorruption and Immortality, and be made like Christ's most Glorious Body*, Phillip. 3. 21. The Scriptures evidently declare as much : *Job* had a foresight of it, and *Daniel* foretold it, and *Ezekiel* had a Vision of it, and the New Testament mightily and plentifully confirms it.

Let serious Believers then live in the Expectation and Comfort of it. It is a very pleasing thing, and let it revive us. It is a marvellous Pleasure to rise again, and united Soul and Body to live happily, and never dye any more.

Death is a great check upon our Spirits, and quencheth all Natural Joy ; and only Faith can overcome the sadness of the Thought of Dying. Though a Man be in the heat of Business, or in the height of Pleasure, if a thought of Dying breaks in and fixes upon him, it puts a damp upon his Mind. Though he be a Man of Virtue, Piety and Godliness, it is a check upon him, till he can recollect his Faith. And therefore many Men (though very
unwisely)

46 *What it is to eat the Flesh of Christ,*
unwisely) avoid Speaking, or Hearing, or
Thinking of Death.

It must then be a mighty Pleasure to be
alive again and happy. And let the Ex-
pectation of it be often in our Hearts to
rejoice us, and comfort us concerning the
natural Sadness that attends Death, and the
looking for it.

The immediate Happiness of being with
Christ upon dying, and of resting from all
uneasy things, and of being in the Society
of Angels, and *the Spirits of Just Men made*
perfect, is a proper Comfort against Fears
of Hell: But the most proper Comfort a-
gainst Death, is the Expectation of a glo-
rious Resurrection.

For though we were never so sure of pas-
sing in our Souls into the Heavenly Para-
dise, and being there gloriously Happy in
the Vision of God, and the Enjoyment of
Rivers of Pleasures at his Right-hand for
evermore; yet dying is unpleasant to Na-
ture, tho' endu'd with Grace: For the Bo-
dy is a dear part of us, though less noble
than the Soul; and there is an unwilling-
ness to leave it to a Grave, to be corrupted
there, and Meat for Worms.

Might we choose, we should like best to
have *Enoch's* Translation, or *Elijah's* Cha-
riot for conveyance of Soul and Body toge-
ther to Heaven: And then we should de-
part without reluctance. We should not
then

then say, Spare a space; but immediately take a cheerful leave of all Persons and Things here below.

But to be Sick, or in Pain, to pine away and consume in the Passage, and expire, and leave the Body to be Confined, and Interr'd, this is very unpleasant: And the most proper Comfort against it is the Expectation of a glorious Resurrection.

Thus then, a Real Christian may Comfort himself against Death and the Grave, and all the melancholy Representations of dwelling in Darkness, and the Worms feeding upon him. My Grave is my Bed; there my Body shall rest free from Sickness and Pain, not liable to the rage of any persecuting Hand. For though Malice may open a Tomb, and use the Body disgracefully; it's folly all over, the Body having no perception.

And whatever Grave I am in, I rest in it but a long Night, and then shall awake, rise, be easy, healthful, glorious and immortal. And therefore I ought to go more pleasantly to my Bed of Dust, than to that between my Curtains; because when I rise from my ordinary Bed, I rise to Labour, and meet with, it may be, Afflictions and Temptations; but when I come from my Bed of Dust, I meet neither.

Thus the Expectation of a Glorious Resurrection, is the most proper Comfort against

48. *What it is to eat the Flesh of Christ,*

against Dying; our Bodies being valuable, and much endear'd to us: And therefore the *Platonic* Notion of the Body, is too low and mean. The *Platonists* vilify the Body too much, counting it the Prison and Dungeon of the Soul; whereas, it is the Soul's proper Habitation, and a Glorious Piece of Divine Workmanship.

And now putting both together, the immediate Happiness of Real Christians upon their Departure, and the Glorious Resurrection of their Bodies, what a Prospect is there for them to please themselves with?

And if we are Christians in earnest, let us often consider the great Happiness we have in assured Hope, and Contemplate it unto Delight; saying, each of us, Within a short time my Soul shall take its flight into the Region of Light and Glory, and with Angels attend the Throne of the Divine Majesty. And after a long quiet Night, the Trumpet shall sound, and my Body be raised Incorruptible, and joyned with my Soul, I shall for ever be Happy in Degrees beyond what I can now conceive.

And if Serious and Holy-living Christians shall be thus Happy, let it move Sinners to comply with Religion and Godliness.

Too many, when they are urged to Repentance and Holiness, are griev'd and offended. As one in a deep sleep and his House on Fire, being awaken'd by his Friend, at first takes it ill to be disturbed: So some, when urged to repent and turn to God, are displeased with a Friendly Monitor.

But if Men would consider, there is no reason to take ill pious Admonitions, since Godliness leads to so great a Felicity.

Sinners are not urged by Ministers to a thing prejudicial, but highly advantageous; to that which will end in a blessed Immortality, and a glorious Resurrection; and should be thankful for holy and serious Warnings, and not offended with them.

D

DISC.

DISCOURSE III.

Of Wicked Mens fulfilling the Dark Part
of the Scriptures.

A C T S XIII. 27.

*For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and
their Rulers, because they knew him
not, nor yet the Voices of the Prophets,
which are read every Sabbath day,
They have fulfilled them in condemn-
ing him.*

THese are the Words of St. Paul in a
Sermon at *Antioch*, in a Synagogue
of the *Jews*, concerning our Lord Jesus.
Him the Dwellers at *Jerusalem* and their Ru-
lers knew not, and condemned: And for
the clearer understanding the Text, I shall
shew the Apostle's design in the Sermon, and
an *Objection* lying against it.

The design is evidently to perswade,
That Jesus is the Christ, and to obtain upon
the Congregation to believe in him. And
his

his Arguments are these; Jesus was descend-
ed from *David*, v. 23. And *John Baptist*
testified of him, v. 24, 25. And God raised
him from the dead. v. 30. and therefore He
is the Christ.

But there lay in the way an *Objection* to
hinder St. *Paul's* Hearers from receiving his
Doctrin, viz That they that dwelt at *Jeru-*
salem, and their Rulers had rejected and
condemned this *Jesus*. And the Objection
may be thus fram'd: Shall we own *Jesus* is
the Christ, when these rejected him? *Je-*
rusalem is the holy City, the capital part of
the Church of God, and the Inhabitants
there, and especially the Rulers, are Men of
Name for Wisdom and Knowledge, and our
Church Governours; and they have de-
clared *Jesus* to be a Deceiver, and not fit to
live. They are our Guides, and more wise
than we; and shall we hearken to the
Preaching of some illiterate Fisher-men,
and yours, an inferior Man, tho' of some
learning, rather than adhere to our High-
priest and Elders, the Learned Officers of
our Church and Nation.

And thus a *Papist* may object against turn-
ing *Protestant*. They that dwell at *Rome*,
the Capital City of *Christendom*, and the
Rulers there, the *Pope*, the *Cardinals*, and
ecclesiasticks of greater and lesser Orders,
and all the Learned there are against the
Protestant Religion, and have condemn'd

it as *Heresy*; and shall I harken to you the Followers of *Luther, Cranmer, Melancton, Calvin* and *Beza, &c.* and turn from the Glorious Church of *Rome*? When *Rome* turneth Protestant, I shall, and not till then.

But to return to the *Jews* Objection against believing *Jesus* to be the Christ. The Apostle aware of the *Objection*, owns it true: But tells his Hearers, that *they that dwelt at Jerusalem and their Rulers were Ignorant, and knew not the true meaning of the Scriptures of the Prophets; but had sadly fulfilled part of the Scriptures in Condemning Jesus.*

And such an Answer we have to a *Papist*: It is true, they that dwell at *Rome*, the Pope, &c. have condemn'd the Protestant Religion as *Heresy*; but they are ignorant of the true meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and have sadly fulfill'd a part of them, viz. the Prophecy of a great Apostacy in the Christian Church, in 2 *Thessal.* 2 Chapter; where others can read the Sin and Shame, and Doom of the *Romish* Church. Thus a *Papist* may be answer'd as the Apostle answereth the *Jews* in the Text: In which are observable these things.

1. That *the Dwellers at Jerusalem, and their Rulers, knew not that Jesus was Christ.* There was great Evidence that He was so. He came in the proper time, when the Scepter was departed from *Judah*, and in the time of the second Temple. And He did

the Miracles the Christ was to perform; and was a Holy Spotless Man; and yet even the Rulers, the Church Officers, the Learned knew him not. The Guides were blind, the Doctors ignorant. Unhappy People and Church, whose Leaders caused them to Erre.

2. The Prophets spake of Christ, and so spoke of him, that those who understood the Prophets, saw that *Jesus* was the Christ. Thus *Isajah* spake of Christ, *Is.* 53. as, *A Man of Sorrows*, humbled and rejected, and as working glorious Miracles, *opening the Eyes of the blind*, &c. *Is.* 35. 5, 6. Inquiring then, How shall it be known, who is the Christ? the Voice of the Prophet is this. When you see a Man Working Glorious Miracles in an humble low Condition, and by many despised and rejected, that is *He*. But though the Prophets were read in their Synagogues, the *Jews* and their Rulers knew not their meaning; as now among us, the Scriptures urging Holiness of Heart and Life, a Pure and Spiritual Religion beyond Forms of all kinds, are read in our Churches; but many remain ignorant of the meaning of the Scriptures, and decline, yea, some oppose real Scripture-Holiness.

3. The People and Church of God, (the most of them) and their Rulers, though they had the Scriptures, were ignorant in a

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thing

thing of great moment, in the Ignorance of which they could not be Sav'd.

To have the Scriptures then, and read and hear them is not enough ; they must be understood, or we shall perish with the Scriptures in our Houses and Hands. And we had need implore of God an understanding in the Scriptures.

4. The *Jews* and their Rulers being ignorant of one part of the Scriptures, very sadly fulfilled another. There is a very sad Scripture-Prophecy concerning the *Messias* or Christ, That *he should be cut off*, Dan. 9. 26. And *brought as a Lamb to the slaughter*, Isa. 53. 7. Upon which Prophecies, it might have been said, Who upon Earth shall be found to do this deed, to murder the Redeemer? Must not some Devil be incarnate to effect it? Or at least, some of the vilest Heathens be brought from the darkest Corner of the World to engage in so Villanous a thing? But instead of such, this thing was done by some of the Church, and the Ruling part of it. They fulfilled these sad Prophecies in condemning our Lord *Jesus*. Such are the *Observables* in the Text; and the *Observation* from it is.

That they that are ignorant of, and thro' Ignorance wickedly oppose, or neglect the Bright Part of the Scriptures, the Doctrines, Precepts and Promises; do sadly fulfil, or in them is fulfilled the dark part of the Scriptures

ptures, the sad Prophecies, and dreadful Threatnings. And this is the Language of more Scriptures besides the Text. *Mat. 13. 14, 15. And in them is fulfilled the Prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive. Acts 1. 16. This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the Mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, who was Guide to them that took Jesus. Judas chose the Sin of betraying our Lord to gratify his Covetousness, and fulfilled the sad Prophecy concerning him that should betray him. The sad Prophecy in Jerem. 31. 15. of Rachel weeping for her Children, Herod by a voluntary Act of Cruelty fulfilled, Mat. 2. 17, 18. Dent. 28. is a Prophecy of dreadful Curses and Judgments which in after-times the Jews by their Idolatry brought upon themselves, and fulfilled that Scripture. In the New Testament there is a very doleful Prophecy of some who shall be at our Lord's Left-hand, and hear the sad Sentence, Go ye Cursed—— And many by their Impieties are preparing to fulfil that terrible Prediction.*

Some reject Sound Doctrine, and in them is fulfilled, *There must be Heresies.* Some live Impiously, and in them is accomplish'd *2Tim. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. In the last Days perilous Times shall come, &c.* Thus the Scripture meets with the Ungodly, and is fulfilled in and by them.

Receive then this *Admonition*. Having the Scriptures, let us embrace the Bright Part of them, that the dark part of them may not be fulfilled in us, or upon us.

Let us embrace the Bright Part, *i. e.*

1. Let us receive the Doctrines in the Scriptures, believe them, meditate upon them, rejoyce in them, write them on our Hearts, love and admire them; not read them carelessly, or cursorily, but find them, and eat them; and let them be to us the joy and rejoycing of our Hearts: Especially, the great Doctrines of the Trinity, and Incarnation of the Son of God, of Christ's Satisfaction, and Justification by Faith, should be deeply thought of, and the Revelation of them admired, and most gratefully received.

2. Let us receive the Precepts in the Scriptures, and make them our Rule for the Government of our Actions, Words and Thoughts, and love and rejoyce in them, as *David* did, *Psal* 119. That Great and much Accomplish'd Man, in our Modern Language, that Heroe and Virtuoso, and a Crowned Head besides, had a mighty Esteem for God's Precepts as his Guides and Counsellours. And his Meditations were upon them very frequently; for no doubt, but he might include himself, when he said in the 1st Psalm, *Blessed is the Man that walketh not in the Counsel of the Ungodly:*

But

But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate Day and Night.

The Precepts in the Scriptures should be, and let them be the Delight of our Souls, and written upon the Table of our Hearts.

3. Let us receive the exceeding *great, and most precious Promises of God*; the Beauty and Glory of the Holy Scriptures, *treasuring them up in our Memories*; endeavouring they may be ours, living by Faith upon them.

But for them who will not attend to this Bright Part of the Scriptures, over-looking the Doctrines, rejecting the Precepts, and despising the Promises; they must sadly fulfil *the Dark Part of the Scriptures*, the dreadful Prophecies and Threatnings.

And now, as Moses said to Israel, *I have set before you this Day Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing: Choose Life.* So I may say to you: I have set before you the Bright and Dark part of the Scriptures: And do you choose the Bright part, complying with it, rather than fulfil the Dark Part. One must be; *Choose the better part.*

And let two Things be imprest upon our Minds, viz. (1.) That the Scriptures are a great Treasure: But (2.) enjoy'd by us at our great Peril.

1. The Scriptures are a mighty Treasure, and for the Favour of enjoying them, we can never be thankful enough; it being considerably

considerably peculiar, not all the World, nor half, if a third part, having this Blessing. The Holy Scriptures are Valuable on many accounts: They are the best Treasure of Knowledge, beyond all the Philosophical Writings in the Earth; and the best Rule for the well-governing our Actions, Words and Thoughts. In them we have the greatest allurements to Goodness and Holiness, *viz.* The exceeding great and precious Promises, the everlasting Covenant of Grace in all things ordered and sure: The greatest Terrors to keep us from sinful Compliance, *viz.* The most tremendous Threatnings: The Greatest Satisfaction to a Just Religious and temperate Curiosity, *viz.* The Prophecies not yet accomplish'd. Moreover in the Scriptures we have the most sublime Mysteries; as, the Trinity, Incarnation of the Son of God, Regeneration, Union with Christ, &c. All necessary Knowledge for our Souls Welfare and Happiness; true and most delightful History; the best Precepts and Examples; clear Discoveries of another Life; and the most vigorous Admonitions and Exhortations to Holiness. And being so great a Treasure, my Soul Abominates the Church of Rome, because that Church permits not the People to read the Scripture. The Pretence for it, is, Lest the People should hurt themselves by abusing the Scriptures: As if it were

were good to starve a Man for fear his Stomach should not well digest his Food. An Accursed Mother that denies her Children *the sincere Milk of the Word*, and takes away their Birth-right, in not permitting them the use of *the lively Oracles*. But blessed be the Most High God, we are in a Church that alloweth, and exhorts to the Reading, Learning, Marking, and inwardly Digesting the Holy Scriptures. And Blessed be his Name for *England's* Deliverances from the *Spanish* Invasion, and the Powder-Plot, and for the late Glorious Revolution, and the Settlement of a Protestant Succession, by which marvellous Providences the free Enjoyment of the Scriptures hath been continued to us. In which let us rejoyce; but withal know and consider,

2. That we enjoy the Scriptures at our great Peril. For if we do not improve them, live in them, and order our Conversation according to them, it were better our Eyes had never seen them, and our Ears had never heard them. If we do not seriously improve them, they will rise up in Judgment against us; the Curses in them will come upon us; the Threatnings in them will overtake us; and we shall be Instances of the Divine Vengeance, and the Dark Part of them will be accomplished in our Destruction; as it befel them who dwelt at *Jerusalem*, who fulfilled the *Scriptures*

ptures in Condemning Christ, and perished for so doing, unless some few of them who came to Repentance, and had the benefit of that Prayer of his, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

The USE.

1. Since Ignorance of the right meaning of the Scriptures betrayed the *Jews* into a Condemning Christ, instead of Receiving him, let us suspect our Understanding in the Scriptures, and have a jealousy over our selves, that we may mistake their meaning in something of moment, such as that if we continue in the Mistake will be ruining to our Souls. The *Jews* and their Rulers having been so dangerously Ignorant, and so dreadfully mistaken, it is not for us to be Confident; but we should rather modestly suspect our Judgment.

2. Suspecting that we may mistake the meaning of the Scriptures, let us examine over and over our Doctrines and Practice, and bring them to the Test of the Scriptures a-new. As a Man that hath cast up an Account, and thinketh verily it is right, yet goeth over it again to render it to him more sure; so let us do in reference to Doctrine; and especially let us Examine our Practice, I mean, our allow'd Practice. Is it according to the Scriptures? Or, have we set it
below

below the Scripture Rule, making allowance for Temper, Temptations, Company, Profit and the Mode, which the Scriptures allow not? This deserveth a close Examination. For some by making sinful allowances for these things, make another Rule than God hath made. And because the Scripture telleth us of Pardon upon Repenting, they allow themselves in some things that must be repented of. And this is a pernicious mistaking the Scriptures. Let an Instance clear my meaning; If a Man living generally Sober, is at a time overtaken, and really repenteth, God in Christ forgives him: And this is according to the Scriptures. But if a Man be generally Sober, and saith, I may at a time extraordinary, or in some particular Company drink over-much; this is not according to the Scriptures. For he that saith thus, either counts it no Fault to be once over-run by Wine or strong Drink, or thinks God observeth it not, or presumeth upon repenting of it. And either of these are contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and shew Ignorance of the true meaning of them.

3. Besides Examining our selves, we should Pray much for a right understanding the Scriptures: *David* did this abundantly in *Psal 119.* and in other *Psalms*, though a Man of great Parts and Accomplishments. And the Apostle prayed for his *Ephesians*,
That

That they might have the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, Ephes. 1. 17. We should pray that the Holy Spirit may lead us into all Truth; and not depend upon our Parts or Graces, or both, to keep us from Errour, or Sin.

4. We should Confer with others concerning our allowed Practice, even with them who we think carry Religion too far, and are more strict than is needful, and in our Opinion weak, scrupulous and melancholy. These may have more to say for their strict Management than we imagine, and may know some Scriptures better than we. Let us nor despise them, and conclude we know already all they can produce in their Vindication, but hear them patiently. Particularly, if others are more strict than we in the Observation of the Sabbath, which was Instituted in Paradiſe, enjoyn'd on Mount Sinai, put in the heart or middle of the Moral Law, with a peculiar *Memento* prefix'd, the observation of which hath Incouragement from Temporal and Spiritual Promises in *Jerem. 17.* and *Isa. 58.* and other places, and is changed only as to the Day, under the Evangelical Dispensation: Or, if others are more careful what Company they keep, or more strict in the Government of their Tongues, refraining to say, I Swear, or I Vow, or the like; let us hear what they can say from the Scriptures in plea for these things.

5. For

5. For preventing Ignorance of the meaning of the Scriptures, let us guard against Sins against Light and Conscience; as Immoralities, and neglecting the known Duties of Reading and Praying daily. For such Sins provoke God to give us up to Blindness of Mind, and to darken our Understandings.

6. For preventing Ignorance of the right meaning of the Scriptures, let us submit our Reason to Revelation, and believe what God saith though we cannot comprehend it. That any thing should be without a Cause of its Being, we cannot apprehend. But God saith this of himself in declaring himself Eternal: That *Three bear record in Heaven*, and those Three are Essentially one; That Christ is God and Man in one Person; That there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead; That God Governs the World, and yet Men act with freedom of Will; That both are true, that Men will not come to Christ, and that *no Man comes unless the Father draw him*: These and other things we cannot comprehend. But God hath said them, and it is most reasonable to believe what he affirmeth.

7. To prevent Ignorance of the meaning of the Scriptures, we ought to be mighty careful not to admit any thing into equal Authority with the Holy Scriptures. For so to do provokes God to leave us to Spiritu-

al Blindness. To this agreeth *Isajab* 29. 13, 14. *Wherefore the Lord said, forasmuch as this People draw near me with their Mouth, and with their Lips do honour me, but have removed their Heart far from me, and their Fear towards me is taught by the Precept of Men, i. e. They admit the Traditions of Men into equal Authority with my Word, Therefore behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous Work amongst this People, even a marvellous Work and a Wonder: For the wisdom of their wise Men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent Men shall be hid.* And accordingly this Blindness was abundantly upon this People in our Lord's time, when they equalled Traditions with the Scriptures, and made the *Commands of God of none effect by their Traditions.*

In like manner the *Papists* are a very blind Generation, though some very Learned Men are among them. They have not Understanding to say, Bread is not God, that Bowing to or before an Image is Idolatry, that Praying to Saints is giving God's Glory to another, that Praying in an unknown Tongue cannot be acceptable to God. And all this Blindness is come upon them for admitting Traditions into equal Authority with Scripture, and setting the *Pope's Laws* as high as God's. And whoever shall tread in their steps will fall into like Darkness. Let not us then admit any thing into equal Authority

Authority with the Scriptures, nor near it, neither in Word, nor in Effect.

8. To prevent mistaking the Meaning of the Holy Scriptures in things needful for us to know, let us implore not only Divine Aid in general, but distinctly many times the Teachings of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Scripture speaks of each distinctly, of being *Taught of God, i. e. the Father, of Christ's opening the Understanding, and of the Spirit's leading into all Truth.* Each should be implored, and each Person thereby glorified.

Christians of ordinary Parts and Learning, may be surpriz'd to find the *Jews* and their *Rulers*, the *Papists* and their *Doctors*, mistaking the Meaning of the Scriptures, and may say, How can we hope to escape mistaking them? But let them take the mentioned ways, and they shall escape destructive Mistakes, though Learned Men may be much blinded. *Not many Wise Men after the Flesh are called, 1 Cor. i. 26.*

In our *English Martyrology* we may find *Protestants* of ordinary Parts understanding the Scriptures, when great *Doctors* mistook them, and persecuted them who had a better sight through Divine Teachings.

Taking the mention'd Directions, we may be satisfy'd we are in the right in things needful, or shall be set right; *If in any such thing we are otherwise minded, God*

shall reveal even that to us, Phil. 3. 13.

In the time of our *Lord's* being on Earth, the great Question was, Whether He Preached Truth or Error? And he told his Hearers how they might determine that Matter, *viz.* by searching the Scriptures, *John 5. 39.* But it might be objected, How shall we be sure we mistake not the meaning of the Scriptures, in a thing of such moment as your being the Christ, or not? In reference to this, our *Lord* gives another *Direction*, *John 7. 17. If any Man do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.*

And He who followeth the Directions I proposed, doth the Will of God, and may be satisfy'd God will not leave him in any Soul ruining Errours. But how much Error may mingle with the Grace of God, is not easily to be determined.

And I add some Signs of being led into Truth, and not left to destroying Errour.

1. One Sign of this, is, delighting in the Scriptures, as *David* did, *Psal. 1. 2. Finding God's Words and eating them, as Jeremiah* did; and joying and rejoycing in them; daily retiring for Pleasure to Read the Scriptures, and finding them more pleasing than our necessary Food; more delighting than Recreations. But if we neglect the Holy Scriptures, or read them only as a Task, and are more pleased with a common History,

story or an idle Play or Romance, which are Poyson to Souls, we may very well fear we are mistaken in some things needful to be known in order to Salvation.

2. Another Sign of this, is, being humbled, and *walking humbly with God*, being melted, and our Hearts broken for our Sins, loathing our selves, and trembling at God's Word, and finding our Sins a burden; *For the humble God will teach*, Psal. 25. 9.

But if our Spirits are high, and we conceited of our own Abilities, looking with scorn upon them that are Inferiour, being too proud to learn, we have cause to suspect we are left to some dangerous Mistake; *for God resisteth the proud*.

3. Another Sign of this, is, being Charitable toward the Erroneous, pitying their Errours, and not being inflam'd against their Persons, whether *Jews*, *Turks*, or *Papists*, or any other.

But if the Errours of others make us treat them inhumanely, we may suspect we are under some mischievous Mistake. The blind *Jews* persecuted our Lord and his Apostles. The Ignorant Heathens persecuted the Christians. And the mistaken *Papists* persecute the *Protestants*. Blindness of Mind dwells with Persecution; which is against Scripture, Reason, and good Nature.

4. Another Sign of this, is, being much and solemn in secret Prayer, therein Con-

68 *Of Wicked Mens fulfilling, &c.*

versing with God, addressing him for Wisdom and Grace, and pleading for Direction. But if we are Prayerless, or careless and slightly in Prayer, we may suspect God leaveth us to a blind Mind.

These Four Things meeting in us, we may very comfortably hope we are not in, or shall not be left in any destructive Error; and may go on our way rejoicing. Only let us be sure to add Faith in Christ, and Dependance upon him for Acceptance with God. For if we edge toward Justification by Works, there is nothing that betrays more into ruining Error, and it is it self a destroying Error.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE IV.

Of Early Piety.

1 Kings XVIII. 12.

*But I thy Servant Fear the Lord from
my Youth.*

THE occasion of these Words, was this; *Obadiah* met *Elijah*, and was ordered by him to go and tell *Ahab* that he was there. And the design of them was to find favour with the Prophet, and obtain an Excuse from delivering the Message to the King, fearing that the Spirit of the Lord might carry away *Elijah*, and *Ahab* not finding him might in a rage kill the Messenger.

And herein is *observable*, that *Obadiah* was not ashamed to own he Feared God, but rather accounted it his Honour, and hoped for Safety by it, and that the Prophet in regard to it would not expose him to the fury of *Ahab*. Such were the Occasion and Design of the Words. And in them we have an Instance of *Early Piety*, of one

young, and serious in Religion, *Fearing the Lord.*

And the Piety and Godliness of this Person, either in the Beginning or Continuance of it is very remarkable, considering the Time and Place he lived in, and his Quality, and the Prince and Master he served.

1. The Time he lived in, was an evil and perillous Time, not favourable to true Religion, a Time of his Nation's Idolatry and Apostacy settled under the Reigns of several Kings.

2. The Place he lived in was *Samaria*, the Capital City of an Idolatrous Kingdom, where Fearing the Lord was not the Mode.

3. His Quality was considerable ; he was a great Officer at Court, Governour of the King's House.

4. The Prince he served, was *Ahab*, who was very Wicked. But under all these Disadvantages, *Obadiab Feared the Lord*, and Feared him greatly, *ver. 3.* And from this Instance and Pattern of Early Godliness, we may Observe, That Youth is capable of being seriously Religious ; That the time of Youth is a proper time to be Religious in ; And that 'tis the Duty, Interest and Honour of Young Persons to fear God and be Religious, and the way to Comfort in evil Times and Places, and to Everlasting Comfort.

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afterward. *Jerem. 13. 23. Can the Æthiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? No more can you do good, who are accustomed to do evil.* And Religion in Youth is mighty pleasing to God : the Patterns of it are honourably upon Record in Scripture. And Persons then begin to serve their Generation, when they are Godly ; and till then, they are not a Blessing, but a Provocation in their Families, and Neighbourhood, and Nation. And it may be the only time for Religion : some dye young. All come not to the Grave as a shock of Corn into the Barn, in its season. Some Dye in their full strength, their Bones full of marrow. Others fall like Blossoms before they come to Maturity. And thus it may be with you that are now young : You have not seen the Divine Decrees ; you are not sure of living a Day longer : Therefore think it not too soon to be Religious. Can it be too soon to Remember, Fear, and Love God ? Can it be too early to be Holy and Happy, Pardoned, Justified and Sanctified ? Can it be too soon to Repent, Believe in the Lord Jesus, Pray, and be Holy ? Can it be too soon to be Children of God, united to Christ, and Temples of the Holy Ghost, in a strict meaning ? Can it be too soon to be in the Covenant in all things ordered and sure, to have Fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ? Can it be too soon to be delivered from the Curse

of the Law, and Hell, and to be intituled to Heaven and Glory? Lose not then your Young time; let not Satan have the First-fruits, the beginning of your Strength, the flower of your Youth; but give it to God your Father, Redeemer, and Comforter; Consecrate it to the God of the whole Earth; you are not allowed to defer it to a later time. Judgments hang over you during the Delay, and you must not expect Impunity upon account of your Youth. *Eccles. 11. 9. Rejoyce, O young Man, in thy Youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the Days of thy Youth, and walk in the ways of thine Heart, and in the sight of thine Eyes: i.e. do thus if you dare, or erroneously think it fit; But know, that for all these things God will bring thee into Judgment.*

3. It is the Duty of Young Persons to Fear God and be Religious. All Religion is in Scripture Language comprehended in remembring God, and in cleansing our way, and both are required of Youth. *Eccles. 12. 1. Remember now thy Creator, in the Days of thy Youth. Psal. 119. 9. Wherewithall shall a Young Man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy Word.* And the Light of Nature and Reason require us to be Religious, as soon as we are capable of it, and can understand it.

4. It is the Interest of Young Persons to be Religious, in respect of another Life,
and

and in respect of this, preparing for Prosperity, and entering the World with Advantage in any Trade or Profession; *Godliness having the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

5. It is the Honour of Young Persons to be Religious. It gives Reputation, unless among some who are very Bad: usually Young Persons who Fear God, have a Name and Credit in the Places of their abode. They honour God, and God honours them.

6. Religion in Young Persons is the way to Spiritual Consolation: as it prevents sad Reflections upon Youth pass'd vitiously, or carelessly.

IMPROVEMENT.

You then that are Young, apply yourselves to be Religious *in the Days of your Youth.* And more particularly:

1. In the Days of your Youth seek Divine Knowledge in all the ways of attaining it. Read the Scriptures and other good Books: avoid Romances, Plays, and vain Poems, and delight in the Law of God; meditate in it; hear the Word preached, and diligently attend the Doctrinal, Instructive part of Sermons; confer with Knowing Persons, and Pray much for Divine Illumination, and that Christ would open your Understandings to understand the Scriptures.

Cry after Knowledge, lift up your Voice for Understanding; seek it as Silver, and search for it as for hid Treasure, Prov. 2. 3, 4.

2. In the Days of your Youth, confess your Sins to God, and be humbled. For though it may be you are not Profane, Injurious, False in Speech or Dealing, or Scoffers at Holiness; but have yet escap'd the greater Pollutions through God's Restraints upon you; yet there is much cause for you to humble your selves. And,

1. You that are Young have cause to be humbled upon account of your low and dark Extraction, in Scripture Language, on the account of *the Rock whence you were hewn, and the hole of the Pit whence you were digged.* Your Descent is matter for Humiliation, being Children of *Adam*: Your first Father was a Transgressor, a Traytor to the Great King, a Covenant-breaker by eating the forbidden Fruit; and by the Disobedience of this one, you were made Sinners, Rom. 5, 19.

There is much boasting of Pedigrees, and too much, though there is something really Honourable in a Noble Descent from Men of Worth and Honour; and especially in a Descent from Religious Parents and Ancestours. But still it is humbling to look back to the utmost of our Pedigree, to *Adam*, who lost himself and all his Posterity: So that all must have been ruined for ever,

ever, if the Son of God had not come in the Flesh, and Dy'd a Sacrifice for our Sins.

2. You that are Young, have cause to be humbled on the account of your Original Sin, native Pollution, and sinful Inclination, having been *shapen in Iniquity, and conceived in Sin*, Psal. 51. 5. And therefore Circumcision of old, was perform'd upon, and Baptism is now administred to Infants, to shew they are Sinners by Nature, and need Pardon and Grace, according to their Capacity of receiving Grace.

3. You that are Young, have cause to be humbled for manifold Sins of Omission; for not having Feared God, nor Loved him as you ought; for not having prized Christ, for not being Heavenly-minded; for not being fervent in Prayer; for not sanctifying Sabbaths, and not profiting by the Word preached, and many like things. Though you may say of all the Commands, you have kept them, as to the outward Letter; read the Sermon in the Mount, and you will find you have greatly broken them. And God expects Confessions and Humiliations, broken Hearts, and self-loathing from you.

4. In the Days of your Youth apply yourselves to know the Redeemer, Christ Jesus, God-Man. Believe in him as the great Prophet, Priest and King, the Mediator, the great Propitiation, and *our Advocate with the*

the Father. You need him in your Youth: you need his Blood to cleanse you, and his Righteousness to cloath you, and his Intercession to prevail for you. You are in danger of Hell for the Sins of your Youth; you are under the Curse of the Law, till you seriously believe in him; you till then are under the Power of Sin and Satan. And if you dye young, your Death hath a sting in it, unless you be found in him: A Christless Youth, is in a deplorable Condition; exposed to everlasting Misery, and an Object of Divine Vengeance.

4. *In the Days of your Youth* give yourselves to Prayer. Enter you into your Closets, and pray to your Father in secret; Daily; Morning and Evening. You need Protection, Grace and Mercy; therefore let God hear your Voice. Begin your Day with Prayer, and close it with calling upon God; lest you be left of God, and ensnared by the Devil and the World. Though Servants, get time for Prayer though out of your sleep. You are concern'd to acquaint yourselves with God, *Job 22. 21.* But if you neglect Prayer, you are strangers to God instead of becoming acquainted with him.

5. *In the Days of thy Youth* comply with Holy-living. Comply with, and practise the Holiness enjoyn'd in the Scriptures, and despised by the World; whereof the Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles, and especially

cially Christ was the Pattern. Be not in your Youth contented with Shews, mere Profession, a shining Lamp, a Name to live, and being almost Christians.

6. *In the Days of your Youth* endeavour the Reforming of others: design it, and watch for Opportunities to Instruct, Admonish and Persuade others to Godliness, that you may shine as the Stars for ever, and ever, Dan. 12. 3.

7. *In the Days of your Youth* sanctify the Sabbath. Remember to keep it holy; give it to God, call it your delight. Prepare for it by Prayer the Evening before, begging of God to meet you and bless you, to teach and sanctify you, and make you joyful in the House of Prayer: And spend the Sabbath Religiously from Morning to Night, in the Congregation and at Home; avoiding all Sports, Idleness, and common Visits and Talk. And if you thus do, when Death comes, it will be no Grief of Heart to remember it, but Comfort will wait upon such a Reflection.

8. *In the Days of your Youth* shun the Vices of the Age, Lying, Stealing, Fornication, Swearing, Cursing, calling for Damnation, Drunkenness, Gaming and Scoffing at Godliness: pollute not your Youth with these Abominations.

9. *In*

9. *In the Days of your Youth* confer together, and speak of Religious Matters; as they in *Mal. 3. 16.* that you may be had in remembrance by God, and may be his in the Day in which he *makes up his Jewels, v. 17.*

10. *In the Days of your Youth* become Heavenly-minded. *Set your Affections on things above; let your Conversation be in Heaven.*

2. Since Young Persons should Fear God and be seriously Religious, some must be reprov'd and put in mind of their Sin and Danger; some Youths are Ignorant, some Profane and Riotous; some but sober, not Religious; ashamed of pretending to it, or counting it too soon to concern themselves about Religion.

But know Irreligious Young Persons, you offend God, slight the Redeemer, and grieve the Holy Spirit, and provoke the Most High; and young as you are, you lie at the Mouth of Hell: some of your Age and Stature are gone down to the sides of the Pit: And wicked Ones of your Years departed are in Misery, lamenting their Impieties. And if you dye in Youth impenitent, you must be gathered to that sad Company. God will not spare an ungodly Youth, but punish him for not remembering his Creator, and for not cleansing his Way. You may see in the Scriptures
God's

God's holy Severity against ungodly Youths. The Son of *Shelomith* Blasphem'd, and was Stoned by God's Order, *Levit. 24. 11, 14*. And it was a standing Law, that a Stubborn and Rebellious Son should be stoned to Death, *Dent. 21. 18*. *Nadab* and *Abihu* in *Levit. 10.* and *Hophni* and *Phineas*, call'd Young Men, *1 Sam. 2. 17.* are sad Instances of Vengeance overtaking Ungodly Young Persons. *Shechem*, a young Man, by the Sin of Fornication brought destruction on himself and his City; God being Just, though *Simeon* and *Levi* did Cruelly, *Gen. 24.* *Er* and *Onan*, young Men, for their Impiety were slain by the immediate Hand of God, *Gen. 38.* *Rehoboam*, a young Prince, harken'd to bad Counsel, and rejecting good, suffered deeply, Ten Tribes revolting through God's just Judgment. Let not then Old Men onely, but Young Men and Maidens fear and stand in awe of God's Judgments.

§ 3. Since young Persons should be Religious, you that have the Charge of Youth, help them in the matters of Religion. Teach them, Warn them, incourage Goodness in them, and be Examples of Holiness to them. They need your help, considering their natural evil Inclinations, and manifold Temptations. In Faithfulness to God, and in a Tenderness to them, and in due Care of your own Souls, give them your Assistance

Assistance in reference to Religion. Imitate *Solomon* in this, who took mighty Care of his Son, and wrote the Books of the *Proverbs* chiefly for him; and it might very fitly be call'd *Solomon's Advice to his Son*. And you have other Patterns of this kind, as *Abraham* commanding his Children and Household to keep the way of the Lord; and *Joshua* resolving, That he and his House should serve the Lord; and *Solomon's Mother* instructing and charging her Son, in the last of the Book of the *Proverbs*; and *David* in like manner commanding him to *know and serve the God of his Father*. And Negligent Parents have a dismal Account to give to God, whose Children will for ever complain of them.

4. Since Young Persons should be Religious, let none hinder them from being so. Let none quench any good Inclinations that appear in them by scoffing at them, or by alluring them to Sin, or giving them bad Examples. It is a most mischievous thing to a Kingdom to allure Youth to Wickedness; a most unkind and treacherous thing to their Families, and the greatest Villany to the young Persons themselves; most evident serving the Kingdom of Darkness; and to God most provoking. Yet there are some such in a Christian Protestant Nation, who attempt upon others, as soon as they are out of their Childhood, to

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allure

allure them to Intemperance, Blasphemy, and Wantonness; scoffing at Godliness, and neglecting all holy Duties, but only the outside of our Publick Forms. Some lie in wait to draw young Persons into the ways of Vice, and Riot; and 'tis a Triumph with them to debauch one that hath been sober, and make him free of an Infernal Society. But what an account have such to give to God! To such I give this Admonition, Though you resolve to persist in your impious Ways, yet let the Youth alone: And do not pluck double Vengeance upon your Souls by seducing others.

5. Since young Persons should be Religious; you that are so, be exhorted to these following things:

1. Be comforted in the early beginnings of Divine Grace. Let it rejoyce you to find the Spirit of God resting betimes upon you, working in you Repentance, Faith, Zeal and Godliness.

Estates, Honours, Offices, Principalities, Crowns and Scepters are not comparable to these Graces, more precious than all worldly Enjoyments. Faith is precious, and so is every Grace, and every degree of Grace is more valuable than the whole World.

2. Be thankful to God for your early Beginnings in Religion. Praise him in the height for a thing so peculiar, and attend

ed with the Priviledges of Pardon, Justification, and special Adoption.

3. Admire herein Divine and Free Grace, making you to differ. Look into your own Tribe of young Persons; see how many evidently go astray, their Parents mourning over them; how many of them are in the Armies of *Lucifer*, under the Banners of the Devil, World and Flesh. Admire then the Grace of God towards you. He might have turn'd them, and left you under the power of Sin and the Dominion of Satan: You ought to be amaz'd and astonished.

4. Expect the Comfort and Reward of Early Holiness in this and the other Life. God will remember the Kindness of your Youth: Either some great outward Prosperity, or much Spiritual Consolation, or great Supports may be expected upon an early complying with serious Religion.

5. Proceed in Godliness, and be not deterred by Reproach; you must expect it. Some will treat you scornfully: But set your Faces as a Flint: Remember the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and our Lord himself met with this Usage, and that being reproached for Religion, *the Spirit of God, and of Glory resteth upon you*, Pet. 4. 14.

And as an Incouragement to Early Piety, and to draw you that are not yet Seriously

Religious, Consider you shall immediately partake in the glorious Priviledges of the Gospel, as soon as you become alive and sincere in Religion. You shall not tarry till Old-age, Middle-age, or Manhood; but shall immediately be pardon'd, and justify'd, freed from the Curse of the Law, and put among the Children and Heirs; and God will lay you in his Bosom presently: All these Priviledges shall come upon you, and overtake you in your Youth. And therefore comply with Religion betimes, and rather embrace Scorns, than not be Religious, and bind them as a Crown to your Head; and pity the Reproachers of Godliness as drawing Divine Vengeance, and laying a dreadful Foundation for the time to come.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE V.

Of the Angelical Happiness of Holy Men
in Heaven.

Matth. XXII. 30.

*—But are as the Angels of God in
Heaven.*

THE Scriptures to allure to Godliness, speak much of the Happiness of them who are indeed Religious, representing their Felicity as very Sure, and Great and Glorious. But what the Happiness is, to the Enjoyment of which Holy Men are designed, is not so very clear; it is too great to be now fully conceived and understood. But some help to the understanding it we have in this Text, wherein is affirm'd by him who is Truth it self, That the Happiness of Holy Men in Heaven is like that of the Holy Angels; their State there is Angelical: Which may be open'd in the following Things.

1. Angels are Spirits. They have no Bodies, though sometimes they appear in Humane Shapes; they need no Meat nor Drink, nor are they Mortal nor subject to Death: they are not ponderous or heavy, and slow in motion, but very swift: They are not as God every where, not in all or divers places at once, being Creatures, and Finite; but they move swiftly, perhaps as quick as our Thoughts from Place to Place, as may be gather'd from *Dan. 9.* There we find the Man *Gabriel*, an Angel in the Appearance of a Man, caus'd to fly swiftly while *Daniel* was praying, *v. 21.* And he told *Daniel*, That at the beginning of his Supplications the Commandment came forth, i. e. the Commandment to him to fly swiftly to *Daniel*. And in all probability, *Gabriel* was in Heaven before the Throne of God when he was commanded upon this Service, and with *Daniel* on Earth before his Prayer was ended; And how quick then must his motion be?

And in this respect Holy Men in Heaven shall be as the Angels, though not Spirits, yet Spiritual, comparatively Spiritual, as near as may be to the Nature of Spirits. Their Bodies after the Resurrection, are term'd Spiritual Bodies, *1 Cor. 15. 44.* and Bodies Coelestial, not subject to Mortality or Corruption, *v. 53.* and will no more need Meat, or Drink, or Cloathing, or Sleep than the Angels; nor will they be ponderous

rous or heavy, but agile and swift, and no more subject to Sickness, Pain, or Weariness than the Angels.

2. The Holy Angels are Wise and Knowing. To excel in Wisdom and Knowledge *is to be Wise as an Angel of God*, 2 Sam. 16, 17. And this prevailed upon *Eve* to eat the forbidden Fruit; the Serpent insinuating, that thereupon she and her Husband should be as Gods, *i. e. As Angels to know Good and Evil*, Gen. 3. 5. Angels are very knowing in natural Things, excelling no doubt all Philosophers a thousand times over. And in the Knowledge of Natural Religion, doubtless they are very exact, perfectly understanding what is due from Rational Creatures to God, as Creator, Lord and Benefactor; they know all the Instances of Fear, and Love, and Obedience, and Trust due to him. Evangelical matters, the Mysteries of the Everlasting Gospel are not known to the Angels by the force of their Natural Faculties, but being reveal'd to the Prophets, *the Angels desired to look, or pry, or search, into them*, 1 Pet. 1. 12. *And to Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places, i. e. to Angels, is made known by the Church the manifold Wisdom of God*, Eph. 3. 10. But in other things they are exquisitely knowing.

And Holy Men, in this respect, in Heaven are *as the Angels*, greatly Wise, great in

Knowledge, marvellously beyond their present Knowledge. Their present Knowledge transcends that of Unregenerate Men; they are said to *be turned from Darknes to Light, call'd Light in the Lord, Children of Light, and of the Day.* But their Knowledge in Heaven transcends this; 1 Cor. 13. 12. *Now we see through a Glass darkly, but then (when in Heaven) Face to Face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.* Their present Knowledge very much exceeds that of Holy Men under the Law; compar'd with them, they are said, to *behold the Glory of the Lord with open Face*; and yet this is seeing darkly, compared with their Knowledge in Heaven; and this will make them very Happy. To Contemplative Men, great Knowledge is a great Felicity: Some wear out their Bodies, hurt their Eyes, tire their Spirits, and spend their Estates to gain much Knowledge of the Things of Nature; such Pleasure have they in it. How Happy then are Holy Men in Heaven, being as the Angels in respect of Wisdom and Knowledge.

3. The Holy Angels are without Sin. They never offend God, never break the Law and Obligation of their Creation. It is said indeed of God in Job 4. 18. *His Angels be charged with Folly.* In which there is no difficulty, if we understand it of the fallen Angels; but if the Holy Angels are here

here intended, it must be understood comparatively : Their high Wisdom compared with the Wisdom of God, may be term'd Folly; but not absolutely, for they have no Sin. Had they any Sin, Heaven could not endure them.

And in this respect, Holy Men in Heaven are *as the Angels*; being there without Sin. When they leave the Body and this World, they leave Sin, and drop their Infirmities as *Elijah* did his Mantle. In Heaven they never offend God in Action or Word, or Thought, or Inclination; there they need no Repentance or Pardon, *the Spirits of Just Men* being there *made perfect*; having no Remains of Sin, no Complaint like them in *Rom. 7. When I would do good, evil is present with me. The good I would I do not, but the evil I hate, that do I.* And, *I find a Law in my Members rebelling against the Law of my Mind.* A noble Happiness, a Glorious Felicity, to find our selves pure, and needing no more to make Confession of Sin, but to lift up our Faces to God *without spot or wrinkle or any such thing*, *Ephes. 5. 27.* What a Change doth Heaven in this respect make in Holy Men? Here on Earth they are daily at Confession, imploring Pardon, humbling themselves when most Innocent, and in their best frame. But in Heaven there is no occasion for this, being spotless, and not having one Thought amiss.

4. Angels have inflam'd holy Affections. Some of them are term'd Seraphims, from their burning Zeal for God, and Love to him; in this respect they are as a Flame of Fire. And Holy Men in Heaven, are in this like the Angels. There they complain no more of Deadness and Dulness. In the present State they complain much, that though they are sincere, yet they are weak and faint: But in Heaven, like Angels, they are in a Flame of Love and Zeal.

When Affections are high and flowing in holy Duties, Holy Men are much delighted. When it is thus with them in a Prayer, or Reading, or Meditation, or in hearing Sermons, they could almost wish there might be no end of these things. And in Heaven Holy Men have a perpetuity of high Affections, like the Disciples on the Mount, saying, *Lord, it is good for us to be here.*

5. Angels are perfect in Mutual Love. There is no Jar among those Blessed Spirits, no Discord, but all Harmony, having no defect in their Understandings, no Infirmities, no little divided Interests; they are perfect in Love beyond *David* and *Jonathan*.

And Holy Men in Heaven, in this respect, are as the Angels. Here they are too much otherwise; sometimes they Dispute about Preheminence, and fall out by the way. Through differing Opinions, divided Interests, Mistakes and Misrepresentations:
Love

Love is much wanting, or diminish'd among them: But in Heaven they love as Angels, there being no Temptation to the contrary; And what an Happiness is this? Suppose one Congregation all Holy and of one Mind in every thing, and full of Love, how Happy were that People? And thus it is with Holy Men in Heaven, who somewhat disagreed on Earth.

6. *Angels behold the Face of God.* They attend the Throne of God, and have all the sight of him that Creatures are capable of, *Luke 1. 19. I am Gabriel who stand in the Presence of God.* This is their stated Employment, though at times they are sent upon Messages and Service to the Earth. And to stand in the Presence of God, and Contemplate the Divine Glory and Perfections, supposes great and clear Creature-Knowledge of God. And Holy Men in Heaven are in this as the Angels. They have great Knowledge of God, express by seeing him, *Matth. 5. 8.* And by seeing his Face, *Psal. 17. 15. Rev. 22. 4.* This *Moses* desir'd here, but it was deny'd him, as too much for a Mortal, too much for him to bear; a Knowledge of God by Intuition or Vision, not by Reasoning from his Works and Providence, not by Faith in his Word, but in a more direct way. And this is a mighty Happiness, to have the Understanding fill'd with clear Knowledge of the most Excellent Object. The Understanding being the Superiour

perious Faculty, this must be our supreme Felicity.

7. Angels are employ'd in Admiring God, and proclaiming his Perfections, his Holiness, Power and Justice. His Holiness, *Isa. 6. 3. The Seraphims cryed, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts*; His Power and Justice, *Rev. 16. 17. Even so, Lord God Almighty, True and Righteous are thy Judgments.*

And Holy Men in Heaven are thus employ'd in admiring God and his Perfections. And this is a great Happiness. What is more entertaining here than for two to meet, and admire and praise some third Person eminent in Parts and Goodness, and equally the Friend of both. Wine and Musick are not comparable to the Pleasure of enlarging in the Praises of a deserving Friend. What will it be then to abound in the Praises of our God?

8. Angels have the Pleasure of Joy and Rejoycing. They are *the Morning Stars that sang together, the Sons of God that shouted for Joy, Job 38. 7.* And when Sinners repent, there is Joy among the Angels. And Holy Men in Heaven have Joy, and *fulness of Joy, Mal. 16. 11.* The Place, and the Company, and the Employments there fill them with Rejoycing.

9. The Angels are lov'd by God, and never doubt of his Favour: they are the Glorious Works of his Hands, and never offended

offended him; and are therefore under the perpetual Manifestation of his Kindness. And Holy Men in Heaven in this respect, are *as the Angels*. They are lov'd, and know God loves them. Here they often doubt it through Weakness, and sometimes to Correct them God hides his Face from them; but in Heaven there comes no Cloud upon their Spirits: There they have a perpetual shining in of the Light of God's Countenance, and He never hides himself any more from them.

10. The Angels are established in Holiness and Happiness; and therefore are called *the Elect Angels*. The fallen Angels were once Holy and Happy, and might have continu'd so if they had not voluntarily sinned. But the Holy Angels now in Heaven are forever establish'd. And in this Holy Men in Heaven are *as the Holy Angels*, establish'd in Holiness and Happiness; they are Pillars in the Heavenly Temple, and go no more out, Rev. 3. 12. Being chosen before the Foundation of the World, Ephes. 1. 4. The Fall of Adam involv'd them with the rest of Mankind in Sin and obnoxiousness to Condemnation: but the Son of God was sent to recover them, and they are for ever establish'd. Thus Holy Men in Heaven are *as the Angels of God*, in a great measure, and Happy in their manner, qualify'd, employ'd, and

and joyful as Angels; and like them secur'd, settled and establish'd for ever in Holiness and Happiness.

Such is your Portion who are Sanctify'd and truly Holy, sincere and Upright, come out from the World, and separate from the Pollutions of it: you shall be with, and *as the Angels*, their Companions, and like them; as is affirm'd by the unerring Lips of our Blessed and Glorious Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The IMPROVEMENT.

I. Since Holy Men shall in Heaven be *as the Angels*, it is Happy to be Holy. Whatever Opinion the blind, mistaken, vicious and harden'd World hath of Men of Piety and Holiness, looking upon them as weak and foolish if Unlearned, and if Learned as besides themselves, throwing upon them diminishing or ugly Characters; yet are they Happy in the Expectation of being *as Angels*. With some, Holy Men are odious, vile, and *not fit to live*, Acts 22. 22. Some think them (as they speak) an unfortunate deluded Generation, over-run with Fancy, disturb'd with the Fumes of Melancholy, and of weak Intellectuals. But all this is forg'd by Ignorance and Malice in Conjunction, and promoted by the great Enemy of Souls,

Souls, to hinder Men from becoming *as the Angels of God.*

2. Since Holy Men shall be in Heaven, *as the Angels*; you that are Holy, believe you shall be thus Happy; for you may trust him that said it. And believing it, consider it; employ deep Thoughts upon it, and expect it, and flow in Thankfulness in the hope of it; and in Afflictions relieve your selves by it; when you are in Sickness or Pain, or under any afflicting Loss or Trial, you are apt to be discourag'd; but faint not under these Things, be not dismay'd, since the Angelical State is design'd for you. Although then the Mountains should be removed, and the Hills carry'd into the midst of the Sea; though Deep calleth unto Deep, though Clouds and Darkness cover you, and though some very bitter Cup be put into your Hand, be not discourag'd; but look upon all this as a dark Entry leading to the Glory of an Angelical Felicity.

3. Since Holy Men shall in Heaven be *as the Angels*, you that are not Holy, be exhorted to become Holy; let such a Reward draw you into the ways of Holiness. It will not be to your loss and disadvantage to comply with serious and strict Godliness. Being then solicited to repent and deny Ungodliness, and practise reproach'd Holiness, be not grieved angry and displeas'd, no hurt is intended you; for great is the Reward of enduring
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the Difficulty, and bearing the Reproach of being Holy, a being *as Angels*; better than all the Pleasures of Sin, and all the Riches, Honours and Glories of this World; better than Scepters, Crowns, and Laurels.

Objection. But it may be said by some, It may be we shall be thus happy though not Holy, Religious, Serious and Mortified. We hope we may live in Sin, and die in Peace, and be as Angels in Heaven, though we Indulge our Lusts on Earth. Preachers say other things, but this is our Expectation.

Answer. Whence is this your Hope? Not from the Scriptures. They tell you *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*. Heb. 12. 14. not from any Revelation from God, for his Revelations cross not his Written Word. This Hope will make you ashamed: The Root of it is Rottenness, and the Blossoms will go up as the Dust; it is but a Spider's Web. It is so far from Truth that you shall be happy as the Holy Angels, though you continue in your Sins, that Hell will be your Portion, and there you will be like the fallen Angels.

1. Wicked for ever like them, never to be changed to the better, ever sunk in Sin and Impiety, perpetual Strangers and Enemies to God, without any Opportunities for Converting, and being Regenerated.

2. In

2. In Hell, you will be like the Apostate Angels, ever under the Displeasure of God, Objects of his just Hatred and Vengeance, never to be Reconciled, never to have any Overtures of Peace : A Dismal Condition, when it shall be perceiv'd and felt.

3. In Hell, you shall be like the fallen Angels, Discontented, Vexed, and Raging ; willing, but not able to pluck the Holy God from his Throne, like wild Bulls in a Net, full of the Fury of God.

4. In Hell, you shall be like the Evil Angels in Desperation ; a thing grieving beyond expression. A little Image of it is in some Criminals at a Bar of Justice ; while they have the least hope of being acquitted, their Spirits are kept up ; but when they are Cast, and the Judge begins to pronounce the Sentence, they turn pale, and sink, are disordered, and Terroures are evidently upon them. And the Perfection of this, you will find in Hell. Put away then the presumptuous Hope of being Happy as the Angels if you persist in your Sins, and be assured, Impenitency will make you Miserable like the Devil and his Angels.

And as *Moses* said to *Israel*, Deut, 30.
5. *I set before you Life and Death, Blessing and a Curse ; So I say to you, I set before you Life and Death, an Angelical Happiness, and a Diabolical Misery ; now make your choice : Will you be Holy and Happy*

py as the Holy Angels? Or continue in your Sins, and be Miserable as the Apostate Spirits. One of these must befall you; there is no middle Condition in the other World.

But some may say, Perhaps our Being will perish, and then we shall feel no Misery.

Ans. No, Life may be destroy'd but not Being; you have no Refuge if you persist in Sin. Might you be annihilated, that were some Relief, or if you might be turned into Beasts; but it cannot be: Hell must be your Place, and the Evil Angels your Company, and you must be like them in Misery.

Quest. And if it should be said, Why will God do thus with the Ungodly? Is this his Way equal?

Ans. It is. And the Equity of it may be seen in these things.

1. Wicked Men are now much like the fallen Angels in Sin. The fallen Angels are disobedient to God, and hearken not to his Voice; and the Ungodly are disobedient, *God calls, and they refuse*, Prov. i. 24, 25. He calleth them by the Scriptures, Providence, and Conscience; but they have no Regard to his Calls.]

The fallen Angels are Enemies to God and Rebels, and hate him: and Wicked Men are all this, in the Language of the Scriptures, and in truth; and they resemble the Prince

of Evil Angels, as Children their Father, *John* 8. 44. They have the Image of the Infernal Spirits sadly imprinted upon them. And being thus like them in Sin, it is Equity and Proportion to render them like miserable. The Ungodly think of no such Resemblance between them and the Apostate Spirits, dressing by a false and flattering Glass of Presumption or bad Example; but the thing is true according to the Scriptures. And if Devils were Incarnate, they would act like Wicked Men.

2. Wicked Men are in the same Conspiracy against God, and his Honour and Glory, as the fallen Angels. They Conspire to drive Religion out of the World, that there might be no Fearers of God, or Lovers of him, none to Honour or obey him. And the Ungodly joyn them in this Design, desiring and endeavouring others may be no better than themselves.

Now if all that are Guilty of the same Conspiracy against the Crown and Dignity of our Sovereign God, be at length shut up in the same Prison, bound in the like Fetters, this is but equal.

But the Ungodly own nothing of this Conspiring against God; they declare they are far from it; they cry, *The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*; and pretend they are on God's side: So did the *Jews*, when they Crucify'd Christ; and persecuted

persecuted his Apostles and Disciples. They declar'd they were for God, and *Moses*, and the Law, and the Church of God; but *they erred not knowing the Scriptures*. And if the Ungodly were conversant in the Scriptures, they might be convinced of their Conspiring against God and his Honour, together with the Fallen Angels, with whom they are in League, though they have not made an explicate Covenant with the Devil, and sealed it with their Blood: The Ungodly, consider'd as a Family, the Devil is their Father; consider'd as an Army, Satan is their Leader; consider'd as a City or Polity, the same is their Governour, and under him they Conspire against God and his Honour in the World; Satan is their Guide and Pattern; they walk according to *the Prince of the power of the Air*, and *he works in them, and filleth their Hearts*, Ephes. 2. 2.

And now upon the whole of what hath been said, it were well if Men would look more into another World; I mean, the World of Angels, the Bright and Dark part of that World, the Good and Bad Angels; and consider that this World of Men must be at last gathered to that of Angels; Good Men to the Good Angels, and Bad Men to the Bad Angels, and be for ever together. We too much forget the unseen numerous Angels, and that within a little
time

time we must come into a World of Spirits, and be sorted with them.

Were this consider'd duely, it would move Endeavours in us to be like the Holy Angels, in Obeying and Doing the Will of God. And this would lead off from Sin, Vice and Impiety of all kinds; forasmuch as wicked Livers must have for their Everlasting Company the Apostate Spirits.

And the World of Angels would be more considered, if the Scriptures were duly read and regarded; for the Scriptures speak much of Angels, and tell us, *The good Angels are ministring Spirits sent forth for the ministring to them that shall be Heirs of Salvation*; and that the Bad Angels are mighty busy in promoting Impiety of all kinds, and especially Idolatry and Superstition. They also hinder the Servants of God what they can in the discharging of their Offices, and in the performing their several Duties; they stir up also the Powers of the Earth against holy Men, and are behind the Curtain, the great Movers of Persecution against the Church of God. And the Christian's Warfare is chiefly against the fallen Angels, *against Principalities and Powers, and the Rulers of the Darkness of this World against Spiritual Wickednesses*, or wicked Spirits, *in high Places*, roving about in the Region of the Air, *Eph. 6. 12.* And in reference to the Assaults of these un-

seen Enemies, we are exhorted, *v. 13. to take to us the whole Armour of God.*

But though holy Men are engaged in a War against these fallen Angels, most Men take no notice of these Infernal Spirits as Enemies; but are in their Tents, and in Agreement with them.

Let us then think more of these unseen Spirits, and range our selves on the side of the Holy and Elect Angels, by Revering, Loving, and sincerely Obeying God, and by promoting Piety and Holiness in our Places and Stations, that we may for ever be *as the Angels of God in Heaven.*

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE VI.

The Enjoyment of the Word of God, *England's* great Happiness.

Pfal. CXLVII. the 19th, and part of the 20th Verse.

He sheweth his Word to Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgments to Israel. He hath not dealt so with any Nation.

IN these Words we have *Israel's* Priviledge above other Nations, in having the Word of God, *i. e.* The Holy Scriptures, and Prophets, Priests and Levites to Interpret them, and give Exhortations and Admonitions from them, This was *Israel's* high Priviledge, *That to them were committed the Oracles of God*, Rom. 3. 1, 2.

In many other Things, other Nations were like to *Israel*. *Israel* was Populous, and so was *Midian*; *Israel* was Rich, and so was

104 *The Enjoyment of the Word of God,*
Tyrus ; Israel was Valiant, and so was Edom ;
Israel was Learned, and so was Egypt, Mo-
ses being learned, in all the Learning of the
Egyptians : But in this, Israel was above
them all, in having the Word of God : He
hath not dealt so with any other Nation.

And in this, we are like *Israel*, though not in so great a peculiarity, some other Nations having with us *the Word of God*.

And hence observe (as a Word in season) That our great Happiness as a Nation, is the enjoyment of *the Word of God*, i. e. the Holy Scriptures, and the Word Preach'd.

Particular Persons may have a greater Happiness ; and that is, the Word of God imprest effectually upon their Minds to the producing real Repentance, Faith, and Godliness in them, no whole Nation being thus Happy as to be all Righteous. Our great Felicity then (as a Nation) is the Enjoyment of *the Word of God* ; as may appear by these Things.

1. To enjoy *the Word of God*, is a great Happiness in it self, as it is a Spiritual Happiness, respecting the Soul. To be Populous, Rich and Valiant, only relate to the Body ; but the Enjoyment of *the Word of God*, if improved, makes the Soul Happy, which is of more worth than the whole World, *Matth. 16. 26.*

2. The Enjoyment of *the Word of God*, is a great Happiness, considering how our Fore-fathers

Fore-fathers struggled and prayed for it, many of them choosing rather to be depriv'd of their Estates, Liberty and Life, than not to enjoy *the Word of God*.

3. The Enjoyment of *the Word of God*, is a great Happiness, in that it is somewhat peculiar; many Nations not having it. *Heathen* Nations have it not: *Turkish* Nations have it not: *Popish* Nations have it not; the Scriptures being lock'd up from their Vulgar People in an unknown Tongue. They are Strangers to the Covenant and Promises.

4. The Enjoyment of *the Word of God*, is a great Happiness, being attended with external Blessings in a signal manner, Places flourishing commonly in Wealth, where there is much Reading and Preaching of the Word. Thus it is our great Happiness that we enjoy God's Word.

And hence may be inferr'd, That if we are in danger of losing the Enjoyment of *the Word of God*, we ought to be deeply concern'd. Were we in danger of a Plague, or Famine, or Invasion, should we not be much concern'd? But we should be much more so, if in danger of losing *the Word of God, the Word of Grace, of Life and Salvation*.

Quest. Are we in danger of this?

Ans. We are.

Quest.

Quest. Whence is our Danger of losing the Enjoyment of *the Word of God*?

Ans. 1. This Danger is towards us from the Popish Interest at Home. The *English Papists*, though discourag'd and doubly Tax'd, yet are not dead: They live, and are grived, and restless, and ready for Revenge, if they may find Opportunity. We dare not destroy them; our Holy *Protestant Religion* binds us to more Charity and Meekness: But their Superstition will put them upon Persecuting and Ruining us. So far then as they can hurt us, we are in danger of losing the Jewel of the Divine Word

2. This Danger is towards us from them that are Disaffected to our happy Government; I mean not, that they directly design to bereave us of *the Word of God*; but they endeavouring to disparage and weaken the Government, do incourage and help them, who if they can, will deprive us of the Word, and ruin us and them.

3. This Danger is impending from the new Conjunction of two Popish Kingdoms, *France and Spain*, both Zealots for Popish Superstition and Idolatry. Each of these single have endeavour'd the Ruin of *Protestants*, and have deeply persecuted them: But hitherto God in his Wise Providence having kept them in Enmity to one another, they have done the less harm to his Church:

Church; whereas being now United, we must look for the joyning of both their Forces to root out Heresy, as they term our Holy *Protestant* Religion.

4. Which is more than all the rest, we are in this Danger by our Sins, provoking God to deprive us of his Holy Word. All Sins do this; but some more especially threaten us with a Famin of the Word: particularly,

1. Our Undervaluing *the Word of God*, tempteth him to remove it: The price of the Divine Word is much fallen among us: Our Fathers had generally more Value for the Scriptures and Sermons, than we have in our Generation: Many pour Contempt upon the Holy Scriptures, and some boast of their neglecting them; many *despise Prophecys*, *i. e.* Preaching of the Word. And this incenses God against us, to punish us with the Loss of his Word. When Corn is undervalu'd and slighted, we truly say, it were just with God to bring Famin or Scarcity. And so it is in respect of our Spiritual Food of the Heavenly Word; the Slight put upon it may be followed with the Judgment of withdrawing it from us.

2. Unthankfulness for God's Holy Word puts us in danger of being depriv'd of it. Many are extreamly unthankful for it, seldom give it place in their Thanksgivings. They, it may be, bless God for Food and Raiment,

Raiment, for Rain and Sunshine, for Health and Wealth; but forget much to thank him for his Word. In few Closets and Families is God praised for his Word; and this may give it wings to fly from us.

3. Loathing this Spiritual *Manna*, may move God to Displeasure, and so put an end to our Enjoyment of it. Many are weary of *the Word of Life*; every Chapter is too long for them, and every Sermon tedious: When they are indulg'd the Opportunity and Privilege of attending *the Word* twice on a Sabbath, once suffices them. As the wicked *Jews* said of Sacrificing, *Mal. i. 13.* so many say of *the Word of God*, when they attend it, *What a weariness is it; and they snuff at it.*

4. Not Improving *the Word of God*, is a Provocation to him to deprive us of the Enjoyment of it. Many remain Unprofitable under *Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept*, and are not at all Reformed and Amended; but are Ignorant still, Profane still, Vain, Unholy, Formal still. Many sit under the Sound of *the Word* a long time, but are not better Parents or Children, or better Masters or Servants than at the first; And this provokes God to take away the Talent, when it is laid up in a Napkin, and not improved. *The Kingdom of God*, said Christ to the *Jews*, *shall be taken from you, and be given to another Nation that will bring forth*

forth the Fruits of it. Such are the Sins which deeply provoke God to suffer a suppression of his Word among us.

A Second Inference.

Since our great Happiness is the Enjoyment of *the Word of God*, and since a Danger is impending of losing this Priviledge, we should excite our selves to great Endeavours to prevent our losing a thing so Valuable.

Quest. What is to be done to prevent the losing God's Holy Word.

Answ. Something, and much of this lies upon the Queen and Her Council, and the Parliament, the Great Council of the Nation ; and we had need pray much, and earnestly that God would guide them by his Counsel and Spirit, and make his Way, *i. e.* the best Way for us, straight before their Faces ; that they may have Understanding in the Times, and know the Things of our Peace in the Day of our Visitation, and may make no Mistakes, nor give any Advantage to the Enemy.

Something also is incumbent upon Magistrates in all Places in Cities and Country. They should watch against the Adversary, and promote Piety, Vertue, and Godliness, and discourage Sin and Wickedness.

And Ministers for preventing the Loss of God's Word, should be diligent in using their
their

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their Talent of Preaching it, in Praying for
the continuance of it, and in urging the
People to Obey it.

Yea, all of us should endeavour to prevent so great a Loss: And in order thereto, let us put a great Value upon *the Word of God*, account it among our Jewels, prize it beyond Corn and Wine, above our necessary Food, and esteem it *as sweeter than Honey, and the Honey-comb.*

And let us be more expressly thankful for *the Word of God*, as being his Word, and Christ's Word, and *what the Spirit saith to the Churches*; as being *the Word of his Grace, the Word of Life, the Word of our Salvation.*

Moreover, let us attend the Preaching of it, when we may, and be intent and serious under it, labouring to be rightly affected with it, and to improve it into Reformation, and Holy-living. Thus let us do for preventing the Loss of the Word of God from among us.

And they that comply not with these Things are *Achan's* in our *Israel*, and trouble us; *Jonah's* in the Ship of Church and State, the Causes of Storms and Tempests endangering us.

O that their Eyes were opened, their Hearts humbled and mollified, their Spirits changed, and their Lives reformed, lest continuing in
their

their Sins they bring on the loss of God's VVord. Think of it Old and Young, every careless unprofitable Hearer of *the Word*, whenever you come and hear *the Word* carelessly, you tempt God to deprive your selves and others of his VVord. Your private Sin of this Kind may bring a publick Mischief.

Moreover, for preventing this Evil take two Directions more.

1. Let us pity and compassionate them who are deprived of a free Enjoyment of God's VVord, and cannot have it but by stealth, and with peril of losing Estates and Liberty, if not Life it self, which is the Case of our *Protestant Brethren in France*.

Their Churches are razed to the Ground, even the beautiful Houses in which they and their Fathers worshipp'd God and heard his Holy VVord; their Ministers are banished; many of them are in Prisons and Gallies, deprived of attending *the Word of God*; let us pity them in their Calamity, lest God bring it upon us also; and let us daily remember them in our Closets and Families, and beg Support for them, and that God would turn their Captivity.

2. Let us employ Prayer for the preventing this sad Judgment of a Famine of the VVord: And more particularly.

1. Let us pray for the Enemies of God's VVord

Word and Gospel, that their Hearts may be turned; and if not, that then their Counsels may be infatuated, their Strength broken, and their Malice disappointed.

Let us also pray for the Queen's Preservation and Prosperity, who without Flattery is, under God, a great Defender of the Faith, the Scripture's Faith; and under whom we enjoy the Liberty of the Word read and preached, none making us afraid; who zealously appears for the Protestant Religion and Interest; and who is much endeared to all Lovers of Truth and Holiness.

And let us Pray for a Blessing on Her Council, and the Great Council of the Nation, Affairs of great moment being now upon their Hands. Moreover, let us pray for the pouring out of the Spirit upon these Nations that they may Repent and Reform, that our Dross and Tin of Profaneness and Formality may be removed, that Iniquity may stop its Mouth, that Righteousness may run down as a Stream, and Holiness as an overflowing Flood in our Land, and that our Provocations may cease.

And now let me move this Question, What if we should lose our Priviledge of Enjoying *the Word of God*? And to this I Answer, Sad things must attend it, such as may make both the Ears of him that hears them

tingle,

tingle, 1 Sam. 3. 11. Particularly, (1.) Should we through the prevailing of Popery lose the Enjoyment of *the Word of God*, your Posterity must be educated in Ignorance, Superstition and Idolatry. And Would not this be very sad to have your Posterity to be depriv'd of Scriptures and Sermons, and taught to bow to Images of the Saints, to pray to the *B. Virgin*, *St. Peter*, and the like, and to worship the Sacramental Bread, and pray for the Dead, and worship a Ragg, or a Bone, and other Relicks of Saints. (2.) You must expect Persecution, unless you will Renounce the Protestant Religion. You know how the *Protestants* are used in *France*; and you cannot look for better measure than Banishment, or Prisons, or at least Poverty and Slavery. And though any of you should lend an Helping-hand to the *Papists* in Power, you must not expect Gratitude from them, whose Principle is, Not to keep Faith with Hereticks. And if any shall turn *Papists*, if you be Rich, they will not believe you, but will have your Estates, and you must be *Papists* and Poor together. Beware then of provoking God to permit our losing the Word by the prevailing of *Popery* among us.

But who provokes God hereunto? I answer, Profane Contemners, and sloathful Neglecters of his Holy Word, and Hypo-

crites that come and hear it, and depart and live in Ignorance or Profaneness, or Worldly-Mindedness, or Superstition, or Formality.

And let me add, even Godly Persons give Some Provocation to God to remove his Word, by being slack in Zeal, and not more fervent in Spirit; not more exact in ordering their Conversation; by not being more diligent in a Religious care of their Families, and by breaking too too much the bonds of Christian Love.

You that in the main are Religious, by these things offend God, and tempt him to withdraw his Word from us, which you so much love and delight in. *Eli* was a good Man, and *Jehoshaphat* and *Hezekiah* eminently good, and yet by some things provoked God to displeasure against their Families and their Kingdoms. You therefore amend and walk more circumspectly.

And to quicken the Caution and Admonition, consider our former and present Danger of Losing *the Word of God*, and the *Protestant* Religion. From the beginning of the Reformation we have been in this Danger. I date the Reformation from *Edward* the Sixth, that in *Henry* the Eighth being but an Embryo very imperfect, and the Persecution of the *Protestants* continuing notwithstanding his Reformation, which consisted in casting off the Pope's Supremacy, in putting the Bible in *English*, and in dissolving

dissolving the Abbeyes. I say, I date the Reformation from *Edward VI.* a Prince eminently Godly, incouraging the Gospel with all his might: But he soon departed, and the Burning *Mary* succeeded, and endanger'd our utter losing *the Word of God.* But in infinite Mercy God shortly remov'd her. And then came Queen *Elizabeth* and recover'd the Reformation and settled it.

But the restless *Papists* still contriv'd to deprive our Nation of *the Word of God*: Many Plots were laid against her Government and Life; and above all, the *Spanish Armada* put us in great danger of losing our Religion.

In the Reign of King *James the I.* they attempted again the Ruin of us and Religion by the *Powder-Plot.*

And in *Charles the I's* Reign, under the shelter of a Popish Queen, they contriv'd for Power and Opportunity to bring in Popery, and deprive us of the Divine Word.

And in the Reign of *Charles the II.* they labour'd hard to undermine the *Protestant* Interest.

And in the late Reign of *James II.* they were upon the point of gaining their Purpose; but were marvellously, almost miraculously defeated.

And now again they have fresh hopes by the Union of two great Popish Powers,

France and Spain; hoping Holland may be a prey, and then England.

And our Danger is not imaginary, but real, and great and pressing. Let us therefore consider our Ways, and turn to God in earnest. It is not a time for our Souls to sleep in Security. Our Case is this, It is doubtful whether we shall have War or Peace; yea, it is doubtful which is best. Unless God be the more Gracious to us, War may destroy us, and Peace may betray and ruin us.

And therefore as always, for God's sake, your Soul's sake, and your Families sakes, and your Neighbours sakes, so now for the Nation's sake, and the Protestants sakes at home and abroad, reform and amend.

And now it may be said, You have shewed us our Danger and Duty; But is there nothing to incourage our Hopes as a spur to Duty, *viz.* Hopes that the Cloud may be dispell'd, and the feared Evil prevented.

Ans. There are things to incourage our Hopes, *viz.*

1. The Popish Interest is yet divided: divers Princes and States of the Popish Religion are not joyn'd with them whom we fear, and are guarding against. They are not all Combin'd; God hath yet prevented that.

2. There

2. There is a great Harmony between the Queen and Her Parliament, to the grief of *Papists* among us, and their whole and half Friends.

3. There is a Cessation from Persecution among us. This God sees, and it pleases him; and while we are in Peace, it is to be hoped, the God of Love and Peace will be with us.

4. God hath formerly done great things for us. Such a train of Deliverances attended the *Jews*, that it was observ'd by the Heathens, that they that oppos'd the *Jws* did not prosper. So *Haman's* wife Men and his Wife told him, *Esth.* 6. 13.

And in like manner, whoever hath enterpris'd in *England* against the *Protestant* Religion, hath fallen; How many great ones have been broken upon this Stone? And God having appear'd so mightily hitherto for the *Protestant* Cause among us, we may hope, *He will still deliver us.*

And having a degree of Hope, let it quicken our Endeavours to return to God, and please him.

5. There are some Supplicants among us. Some like *Moses* standing in the Gap; like *Noah*, *Daniel* and *Job*, Pleaders and Prevailers with God. It is indeed a loose Generation we live in: but some live holily, and pray fervently, and give God no rest: Were the Land swept of all such, we might

despair; but some like *Jacob*, are wrestling with God: And this gives us hopes.

It is said of a Popish Queen of *Scotland*, that she confess'd, she was more afraid of the Prayers of one of the *Protestant* Ministers there, than of a Band of Armed Men.

The Prayers of Faith, shall save the Sick, and the Nation we hope. And blessed be God, we may yet hope to continue in the Enjoyment of his VVord. And, may it remain in this Land from Generation to Generation, as long as Sun and Moon endures.

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE VII.

Of another Comforter, or the Acts of the Holy Ghost after our Lord's Ascension.

JOHN XIV. 16. and part of the 17th Verse.

And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever : Even the Spirit of Truth.

OUR Lord's time of Suffering, Dying, Rising again, and Ascending into Heaven being near, to comfort his Disciples in his Absence, He telleth them in the Text, *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever :* and not only for a time, as I do; *even the Spirit of Truth*, the Holy Spirit who inspired the Pen-men of the Scriptures.

The Holy Ghost in whose Name we were Baptized is the Person Christ promised that his Father would send, calling him the Comforter or Advocate. And there is a word may include both, and that is, **The Helper.**

And the *Observation* from the Words is, That whatever might rightly be expected from our Lord by the Church, or any particular serious Believer, supposing his continuing here on Earth, the same is supply'd, in his bodily Absence, by the Holy Spirit. And,

1. Whatever the Church might expect from Christ, supposing his continuing here on Earth, is supply'd by the Holy Ghost in his bodily Absence. And to clear this, I shall shew you some of the principal Affairs of, and relating to the Church after our Lord's Ascension, and how the Holy Ghost acted, and was expressly acknowledged in them.

1. Upon the Ascension of our Lord into Heaven, the First thing that came under Consideration with the Church, was the filling up the number of the Twelve Apostles, diminish'd by the Apostacy and Death of Judas, *Acts* 1. 22. *One must be ordained to be a Witness with us of his Resurrection.* And two were appointed or nominated for this Office. Now in relation to this matter, not having our Lord bodily present with them, they had recourse to the Scripture concerning Judas, *Psal.* 109. 8. *Let another take his Office.* And besides that *All Scripture was given by Inspiration of God, and Holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,* the Holy Ghost is expressly mention'd in this Scripture concerning

Judas

Judas, ver. 26. *Men and Brethren, this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Ghost by the Mouth of David spake before concerning Judas. And thus the Holy Ghost was consulted in this matter, and it was undertaken by his Direction.*

2. When the number of the Apostles was fill'd up, the next thing was to have them furnish'd for the Preaching of the Gospel in the World. And for this purpose, *They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other Tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance, Acts 2. 4.*

3. The Apostles applying themselves to Preach the Gospel, *the Priests, and the Captains of the Temple, and the Sadduces came upon them, and imprisoned them, and examined them by what Power they preached, Acts 4. 1, 3, 7.* Upon this, the Apostle Peter undertook to vindicate them, *being filled with the Holy Ghost, ver. 8.* And being dismiss'd with Threatnings, *ver. 21. They went to their own Company, and reported all the Chief Priests and Elders had said to them, ver. 23.* And now needing new Incouragement, *They prayed, and the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness, ver. 31.*

4. After this comes the Story of *Ananias and Sapphira*, how they sold a Possession, and kept back part of the Price. And the Apostle

stle

He discovering their Hypocrisy, expressly mentions the Holy Ghost as concerned in the Affront, *Acts* 5. 3. *Why hath Satan filled thine Heart to lye to the Holy Ghost?* And in verse 9. *How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?*

5. The Apostles coming under another Examination, *Acts* 5. 27. Peter, and the other Apostles answered and said, *We ought rather to obey God than Men;* and affirm'd the Resurrection and Exaltation of our Lord, and added, *We are his Witnesses, and so is also the Holy Ghost,* v. 32.

6. When the Number of the Disciples was multiply'd, a Complaint arising of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their Widows were neglected in the daily Ministration; the Twelve called the Multitude, and declared, *it was not Reason they should leave the Word of God, and serve Tables;* and ordered an Election of Deacons for that Business, *Acts* 6. 1, 2, 3. And in relation to this Choice, there is express mention of the Holy Ghost, ver. 5. *They chose Stephen, a Man full of Faith and of the Holy Ghost.*

7. Then followeth Stephen's long and excellent Oration to the Jewish Council, *Acts* 7. Wherein he charges them and their Fathers *with resisting the Holy Ghost,* ver. 51. He might have truly said, they resisted the Father or the Son; but he chose to fix it upon the Holy Ghost. Upon this, they
were

were enrag'd and cut to the Heart, and Stoned him. But the Holy Ghost was his Helper and Comforter, *ver. 55. But he being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into Heaven, and saw the Glory of God, and Jesus standing on the Right-hand of God. A Vision of Jesus supported him: And he had that Vision being full of the Holy Ghost.*

8. Then followeth Philip's Preaching in Samaria, and the Success of it. Whereupon the Apostles sent Peter and John thither, and they prayed for the Converted Samaritans, *That they might receive the Holy Ghost, Acts 8. 15. And laid their Hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

And in the same Chapter we have the famous Story of the Ethiopian Eunuch's Conversion. An Angel speaks to Philip to go toward the South; and he went, and found this great Man reading in the Book of the Prophet *Isaiah*. And the Spirit said to Philip, *Go near, and joyn thy self to this Chariot.* And when the Eunuch was Instructed and Converted, *the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, ver. 39.* So evidently was the Holy Spirit active in this matter.

9. After great Trials, it pleased God to give rest to the Churches throughout Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and they were Edify'd and Comforted. And in relation to this, there is express mention of the Holy Ghost, *Acts 1. 31. Then had the Churches Rest:*

Rest: And walking in the Comfort of the Holy Ghost were multiplied.

10. After this, we have the Relation of *Cornelius's* Vision, and *St. Peter's* going to him, and his receiving the Gospel. And herein we find the Holy Ghost expressly concerned and acting. *While Peter thought on the Vision of the Sheet, and the Men were come from Cornelius, the Spirit said to him, Three Men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them, Acts 10. 19, 20.*

And while the Apostle Preach'd to *Cornelius* and his Company, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the Word, ver. 44.* And the Apostle being contended with by them of the Circumcision, for going in to Men Uncircumcised, and eating with them, *Acts 11. 2, 3.* He vindicated the thing by the Holy Ghost's concerning himself in it, *ver. 12. The Spirit bad me go with them. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them; as upon us at the beginning, ver. 15. Then remembered I the Word of the Lord, how He said, John indeed baptized with Water; but ye shall be Baptized with the Holy Ghost.*

And in the same Chapter, there are two things more concerning the Holy Ghost. *Barnabas's* Furniture for his Work at *Antioch* in carrying on the Gospel; *He was a good Man, and full of the Holy Ghost, ver. 24.* And the Dearth coming that would afflict the

Or the Acts of the Holy Ghost, &c. 125
the Brethren in Judea, signified by the Spirit,
ver. 28.

11. There being in *Antioch* divers Prophets and Teachers, *Barnabas* and *Saul* being Divinely designed for Service in other Places, the Holy Ghost parted them from the other Prophets, *Acts* 13. 2. *The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the Work whereunto I have called them. And they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia.*

After this, there arose a great Question about Circumcision, and keeping the Law of *Moses*, *Acts* 15. And the Apostles and Elders, and Brethren met, and determined against keeping the Ceremonial Law. And herein there is expresse mention of the Holy Ghost's Direction concerning that Matter, ver. 28. *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.* Necessary for the present time; only Fornication as an Immorality, in all times is to be shunned.

In the 16th Chapter, the Apostle *Paul* and *Timothy* going forth to preach the Gospel, the Holy Ghost over-ruled them as to the Places where they should, and should not preach it. *They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia.* ver. 6. *And assaying to go into Bithynia, the Spirit suffered them not,* ver. 7.

In the 19th Chapter, the Apostle Paul finding at *Ephesus* some Disciples, moved this Question, *ver. 2. Have ye received the Holy Ghost? and laid his Hands on them; and the Holy Ghost came upon them, ver. 6.*

In Chapter 20. There is an Intimation of Sufferings coming upon St. Paul. And the Holy Ghost witnessed it in every City, *ver. 23.* And having sent from *Miletus*, and call'd the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, to make them diligent in their Ministry, he mindeth them, that their Office proceeded from the Holy Ghost, *ver. 28. Take heed to the Flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers.*

In Chapter 21. we have St. Paul at *Tyre*, and there were some Disciples, and they said through the Spirit, that he should not go up to *Jerusalem*, *ver. 4. i. e.* That it was certainly dangerous for him to go thither.

And in the last Chapter, being at *Rome*, and Preaching to the *Jews* there, some not believing, he spake sharply and expressly mention'd the Holy Ghost as foretelling the hardness of their Hearts, *ver. 25. 26.*

Thus the Holy Ghost acted in the Affairs of the Church after our Lord's Ascension, and was, in his bodily Absence, another Comforter, Advocate, and Helper. And the Book of the *Acts of the Apostles*, is a Commentary on the Text, and might properly enough

enough be called, the Acts of the Holy Ghost.

And Upon the Review of what I have collected, we may conclude.

1. The Holy Ghost is a Person, and not only the Power of God. So many Personal Actions as I have mention'd, shew him distinct from the Father and the Son, and that He is not only the Power of God. For where were the sense, if we should say, The Power of God said to *Philip*, *joyn thy self to this Chariot*; or the Power of God said to *Peter*, *Three Men seek thee*.

But the Adversaries of the Personaliry of the Holy Ghost, tell us, that Personal Actions are ascrib'd to Charity or Love in 1 Cor. 13, 4. *Charity suffers long*, and the like: And therefore Personal Actions may be also ascribed to the Power of God.

Ans. It is evident the Apostle meaneth that a Charitable Person suffers long, &c. and not the Grace it self. So that they must bring it to this, That God by his Power said to *Philip*, *Joyn thy self*, &c. which is so far from Scripture Language and Sense, that to say no more, It is poorly said, and they should be asham'd of it.

2. We may conclude from what hath been collected, That the Holy Ghost is a Divine Person, or God, his Acts being evidently Divine. To fill the Hearts of the Apostles and others with Gifts and Graces,
and

and to dispose of the Preaching of the Gospel in one Place, and to forbid it in another, to make Ministers, Overseers of the Church, and the like, are surely Divine Acts, Acts of God.

3. We may conclude, The Holy Ghost being another Comforter, or Helper in the want of Christ's bodily presence, or Christ's Vicar to take Care of the Church, that it is a great Usurpation in the high Bishop of *Rome* to call himself *Christ's Vicar on Earth*. This is pretending to be another Comforter, Advocate, or Helper for the Church, and an invading the Office of the Holy Ghost.

4. Upon what hath been said of the Acts of the Holy Ghost, be cautioned against throwing any Contempt on the Holy Spirit, who is so Great in Essence, Person and Office. Beware of passing any Slight

1. Upon his Name, in Jest or Earnest, under any pretence whatever. To Scoff at the Holy Spirit is dreadful; and for them to do it who have been Baptized in his Name, and say, They believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; and, Take not thy Holy Spirit from us, is so incongruous, besides the Impiety of it, that any Rational Man making Profession of the Christian Religion should abhor it.

2. Beware of speaking slightly of the Holy Spirit's Operations, Aids and Assist-

ances, his Teachings, his Sanctifying and Comforting Influences, and his Help in Prayer. To Reproach these Things is to Reproach him.

3. Beware of pouring Contempt upon his Temples, in a strict sense ; that is, them who are really Holy : These have the Honour to be the Habitations of the Holy Spirit ; and to Reproach them, is to Vilify the Holy Ghost himself.

His Name should be revered, and his Operations esteem'd, and his Temples lov'd, instead of being scorn'd. And woe to them who take not Caution. Let us receive the Warning and Live, and Act, and Speak, and Think, with great Regard to the Holy Ghost.

2. Whatever any serious Believer might rightly expect from Christ, supposing his continuing here on Earth, the same is supply'd now in his Bodily Absence by the Holy Ghost.

Serious Christians are apt to think the Apostles were mighty Happy in the Presence of Christ on Earth : And they were so. And we, if serious Christians, are no less Happy, if we use our Faith, and consider, as we ought, the Holy Spirit supplying our want of Christ's Bodily Presence.

And to render this clear, I shall shew what we should expect from our Lord, if here with us, as He was with the Apostles ;

and that these very things are suplyed by the Holy Spirit. And,

1. We should expect from Him all needful and seasonable Instruction. I say needful Instruction; for Christ did not satisfy the Curiosity of the Apostles, when they said to him, *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?* *Acts* 1. 6. Seasonable Instruction also might be expected from him, but no other: For our Lord said not every thing at once to his Apostles; but told them, *I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.*

Now the Holy Spirit is our Teacher. And from him we may expect, in a due use of Means, Study, Prayer, attending Sermons, and godly Conference, all needful and seasonable Instruction, and being kept and recalled from ruining Errours.

2. Were our Lord here on Earth, as formerly, we should expect Strength from Him to resist the Temptations we meet with, and to discharge the Duties incumbent upon us. And in a due use of the Means mention'd, we may expect to be *strengthened with all might by his Spirit in the Inner-man*, and thereby to overcome all our Spiritual Enemies gradually, till we come in the end to be *more than Conquerours, through him that lov'd us. More than Conquerours, i. e.* If more can be; or *more than Conquerours, i. e. Triumphers.*

3. Were

3. VVere our Lord here on Earth, we should expect from Him Incouragement in well-doing, and that He would put Boldness into us to carry up our Spirits against all Opposition made in the VVorld against Faith or Godliness. And this we may expect from the Holy Spirit, being a Spirit of Might, and Power, and Courage,

4. VVere our Lord on Earth, we should expect from Him the resolving our Great Question, VVhether we are in Favour with God? And in a due use of Means, we may have this from the Holy Spirit, *Rom. 8. 16. The Spirit it self beareth witness with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God.* And thus it is, sooner or later, with serious holy-living Believers. Their Spirits upon Examination finding they are Sanctified, do witness *They are Children of God.* And then the Holy Spirit Emboldens them to conclude it, so witnessing with their Spirits.

5. VVere our Lord on Earth, we might expect that He would fill our Hearts with Consolation, and cheer our Minds by remembering us of his, and the Father's Love, and our being chosen out of the VVorld, and design'd to the Enjoyment of the Heavenly Mansions and Inheritance, and the like. And this, in the use of due Means, may be expected from the Holy Spirit. And sooner or later, Real Christians find it. *The Holy Spirit sheddeth abroad the Love of God in their*

their Hearts, suggesteth their being chosen of God, redeem'd from among Men, and design'd to the Full and Eternal Enjoyment of God. And thus what particular serious Christians might expect from our Lord on Earth, is supply'd to them by the Holy Ghost.

Quest. And how doth the Holy Spirit do this?

Ans. Partly by his immediate Suggesting Instruction, Incouragement and Comfort. And partly, mediately by the Scriptures, the Ministry of the Word, and holy Conference, setting home upon our Hearts what is either Written, Preached, or Discour'd to this purpose. Wherefore,

1. Let us observe what the Holy Spirit doth immediately by suggesting Truths and Incouragement, and Comfort, when Light breaks in of a sudden, and we find Comfort flowing in our Hearts unexpectedly, and it may be in the midst of Temptation and Affliction; and let us be thankful, as eminently visited by the Holy Ghost, or as *being in the Spirit*. And,

2. When we find Teaching, and Incouragement, and Comfort convey'd in Reading the Scriptures or Scriptural Books, in hearing Sermons, in Prayer, or in pious holy Conference; let us own these things as coming from the Holy Spirit, as another Comforter or Helper; and not only from the serious application of our own Minds

to those Religious Exercises. And say not only, Blessed be God, a Chapter, a Prayer, or a Sermon hath enlighten'd or strengthened me, or comforted me; but also, Blessed be God, the Holy Spirit hath, in Reading, or in Hearing the Word, or in Prayer, convey'd Light or Strength, or Comfort into my Heart; and I find, according to my Lord's Promise, another Comforter or Helper is sent me from the Father. And say not only, God, or Christ hath convey'd these things to my Soul; but also, that the Holy Spirit hath done it; God by his Spirit, Christ by his Spirit hath done it.

When we receive lively Instruction, we are Taught of God, and Christ opens our Understandings, and also the Holy Spirit Illuminates our Minds; and we should not only own Divine Assistance, but expressly acknowledge herein the Aid and Help of the Holy Spirit.

3. The Holy Spirit supplying us with what might be expected from our Lord if on Earth, let us pray much for the Holy Spirit; not only for Teaching, but for the Holy Spirit to Teach us; not only for Strength, but for the Holy Spirit to strengthen us; not only for Incouragement, but for the Holy Spirit to Incourage and Comfort us. Let us pray much for the Holy Spirit, That God would pour Waters upon the Thirsty, and Floods upon the dry Grounds;

That He would pour out his Spirit upon us; That He would not take his Holy Spirit from us; but send down his Spirit into our Hearts, and grant us the Inspiration of his Spirit. And Christians might be more Knowing, Humble, and Holy, and Comforted, if they Prayed and Pleaded more importunately for the Holy Spirit.

4. The Holy Spirit supplying us with what might be expected from our Lord if on Earth; let us beware of grieving the Holy Spirit, Eph. 4.30. He is grieved by all allow'd Sin; and especially by Scandalous Sins. David and Peter grieved him by their gross Sins. He that falls into Adultery, or Fornication, or Drunkenness, or Lying, or any other notorious Impiety, grieves the Holy Spirit: Blasphemies, Unjust-dealings, Profanations of the Sabbath, and Omissions of Reading the Scriptures, and of Prayer, yea Formality in the Worship of God allow'd, grieve the Holy Spirit. In a transcendent way suitable to his Infinite Perfections, He is grieved by these things; and let us therefore guard against these things.

5. I address to you who are yet in your Sins; not Sanctify'd, not living Godly. Continue not in resisting the Holy Spirit, the other Comforter. You, though you apprehend it not, resist the Holy Ghost by refusing to Humble your selves, and Pray, and turn from your evil Ways. This was a

lad Charge upon the Jews, Acts 5. 7. *Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.* And it is true of you, who are Ungodly, and short of Spiritual Religion, when you read the Exhortations in the Scriptures, or in Scriptural Books to Holiness, in them the Holy Spirit speaks, and calls you to be Holy : and not complying, you resist the Holy Spirit. When a Sermon is Preach'd urging Holiness, and you comply not with it, you resist the Holy Spirit speaking by God's Minister ; When a Parent or Master exhorts you to Godliness, your not complying, is a resisting the Holy Spirit moving to these Exhortations : When Conscience moves you to mind the things of your Peace, and suggests Death is coming, and that you ought to prepare for that and Judgment, which you call Melancholy, and turn to your Diversions to silence it, this is resisting the Holy Spirit, who admonishes you by Conscience. You apprehend your not complying is too much Self-pleasing, too much yielding to sinful Companions : But know it is much more ; it is resisting the Holy Spirit. Now continue not this resisting the Spirit of God. And Consider, that He will not always call upon you, and strive with you : Death is on his way toward you, and being once seiz'd by that Pale Messenger, the Holy Spirit will call upon you no more.

And having grieved, vexed, and resisted the Holy Spirit, very grieving things are coming upon you, if you continue in this evil way. And some may have the Hardness and the Confidence to say, Tell us the worst of what is coming upon us for Resisting the Holy Ghost. And I answer, in these things.

1. You must part with all your Profits and Pleasures, and pleasant Company without exchange for better: Your Songs and Mirth will cease, and nothing remain that is good but a Being, and *no Being* is more desirable than a *miserable Being*.

2. Your Hope will perish, and you will miss of all the Happiness Holy Men enjoy in Heaven: Their Rest there, and Perfection, and Joy, and Society with Holy Angels are none of your portion.

3. You must be grieved for ever, and lie down in Sorrow, Vexed, Tormented. Such will be the end of continuing to resist the Holy Spirit. Be perswaded to give over this perilous resisting the Spirit of God. Why will ye dye and perish? Where is your Wisdom and Reason? Can you bear the Loss of all the Joys of Heaven? Can you endure the Miseries of Hell? Were it not better to deny your selves, and break with an Ungodly World? Let the time past suffice to have resisted the Holy Spirit. Think again; come to Consideration. Remember you

you were Baptiz'd in his Name, and resist him no more. Let my Counsel be acceptable to you : Hear and Obey the Calls of the Holy Spirit, and Hear his Voice this Day, this Hour, speaking by me, that you may Live and be Happy for ever, and the Holy Spirit may be to you Another and an Everlasting Comforter.

DISCOURSE

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DISCOURSE VIII

Of Direction in difficult Cases.

PSAL. V. 8.

—*Make thy Way straight before my Face.*

M*ake thy Way straight, or plain, or clear : Thy Way, i. e. the Way of thy Commands, the Way of my Duty and Safety, which was not always plain and straight to my Apprehension, through my Darknes and Infirmary. Such was David's Petition ; and all God's Servants have need to offer the like Petition to him, and particularly in Cases requiring Prudence, and in Cases wherein no Prudence of our own, or our most Wise Friends can sufficiently guide us.*

I. In Cases requiring Prudence ; as

I. In the Case of Reproving Sin. This is our Duty, *Thou shalt not suffer Sin upon thy Brother ; but reprove him.* But withall Prudence is requir'd in the management of this Duty, that it may be perform'd with advantage. When to Reprove, and where, whether in Company or alone, often or seldom.

sharp

sharply or softly, requires Prudence. *Elisha* Reproved the King of Israel very sharply, 2 Kings 3. 13. *What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the Prophets of thy Father and Mother. As the Lord of Hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the King of Judah, I should not look toward thee, nor see thee.*

Naaman's Servants Reprov'd him softly; *My Father, if the Prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?* Now whether to Reprove sharply or softly requiring Prudence, we had need look up to God for Direction, as also to guide us to a fit Time, and Place, and whether we shall be short or enlarged in Reproving; for some if we say but little, will not regard us; and others if we multiply Words, grow angry and enraged; and the same Person must at several times be dealt with in a various manner.

2. In the Case of managing an Undutiful Child. It requires Prudence whether Parents shall treat such a Child sharply or roughly towards Reforming him. And however they treat disobedient Children, they are commonly blam'd if their Children are not Reform'd; and therefore God must be sought herein for Direction.

3. In the Case of Removing from one Place or Habitation to another, when we may choose

choose to remove or not, and either is Lawful; herein there is need of Prudence, and we should consult our selves and Friends, and also beg of God to guide our Inclinations to that which is best for us. *Jacob* remov'd into *Egypt* by God's Direction and Encouragement, *Gen. 46. 3. Fear not to go down into Egypt.* And though we may not expect his Vision, we may upon wise Considering, Consulting, and solemn Praying, have God's Direction in inclining us to do what in this Case is best.

4. In the Case of committing a Trust to one Friend or another, both Faithful; Prudence may be required, and God should be sought by Prayer to guide our Choice.

5. In the Case of endeavouring to Reclaim a Sinner, Prudence is required, the softest Monition, suiting best with one, and sharp Reproving being more needful for another; and after all our prudent Considering, we need beg of God to open our Lips in the best way and manner.

6. In the Case of treating them who are Soul-sick, or troubled in Mind. And herein Prudence is requir'd; for this Case is various: Some are troubled only for their Sins; some are troubled for their Sins, and some sad Providence together; some are troubled for their Sins, and Sin is the only cause of their Trouble; others have also a distempered Body, and Humours disturb'd increasing

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sing the Affliction of their Minds; some are troubled for very gross Sins; some having escaped them, are troubled mostly for Neglects, for Sins of Omission; some are in their first trouble for Sin; others have been comforted, and under a second Darkness; and some who are troubled in Mind, are naturally of a cheerful Temper; and others are troubled in Mind, and naturally inclin'd to Sadness, Fears, and being Discouraged: And this variety requires a differing Management, and accordingly Prudence: and God must be entreated to lead us in Speaking to and Praying with them that are of a troubled Spirit; for they are great Observers of our Words, and of the very tone of our Voice; and if we are not the better guided, we may increase their Trouble.

7. In the Case of choosing an Employment, or choosing a Service, or choosing a Companion for the Bosom, Prudence is required: And he or she that would be Happy in these things should advise, and pray earnestly to God to Guide and Rule, and Over-rule for them.

8. In the Case of Self-Vindication, when it is needful, Prudence is required that it may not be under nor over-done. and that there may not be an appearance of Pride in a needful pleading our own Cause. And therefore Prayer must be made, that in this matter we may have Divine Help and Direction.

II. *In Cases wherein no Prudence of our own or others can sufficiently Direct or Determine us, we should make Application to God by Prayer to incline our Minds to the best Choice.*

When a Merchant hath the Choice of two Ships to put his Goods into, and no Man can say the one is better than the other for his purpose, or more likely to return safe than the other; in this Case no Prudence can direct: but there is room for Prayer that God would incline him to that he knoweth is best.

When an Husbandman is to sow his Seed, though generally speaking the first Opportunity is to be embrac'd, yet the Event sometimes shews, a Delay might have been more advantagious; in which Case Wisdom cannot direct: But here is room also for Prayer, that God would determine his unresolv'd Mind to that which will be best.

When a Man is designing a Journey, and it is equal to him to go it to Morrow or next Day, or the third; no Wisdom can direct his Choice: but there may be an unforeseen Event in one of those Days, which if he could have known it would have determin'd his Choice. And in this Case Prayer should be offer'd to God to incline to the best.

And

And if it be said, though we take this way of Praying in such Cases, yet it may be we may not incline to the successful Determination, but the contrary. I Answer tis true, it may be so sometimes: But then it will be a satisfaction that we did not omit Prayer in the Case, and so we may be the more compos'd under a Disappointment.

I M P R O V E M E N T.

1. Since in all Cases we may Pray to God for Guidance and Direction, what a Priviledge is vouchsafed us, and how condescending is our God to us? Had he only allowed us to pray for Grace, Pardon, Eternal Life, Protection and Daily Bread, and like things, it had been a great Favour: But besides these we may pray for Prudence, and for Guidance where Prudence cannot direct us. Let us then value this our Liberty and Priviledge above the whole World. Courtiers count themselves happy in having the Prince's Ear, and Liberty and Opportunity to petition for themselves and others. But they must be very careful not to be long in their Petitions, and that they ask not too much at a time. But our freedom with God in Prayer is greater: for we may continue in Prayer as long as we are inclin'd, and may ask any thing we need, any thing that we may

may lawfully desire, though comparatively of lesser Concernment.

Quest. May we trouble God with small things, and of little Concernment?

Answ. It is no Trouble to God for us to ask even lesser things of him, since the Sparrows are under the care of his Providence, and the Hairs of our Head are numbred.

Prudence must govern in Prayer with others. Some Things and Expressions may not be proper, through the Blindness, and it may be the Profaneness of some that are with us in Prayer: But in our secret Prayers, there is nothing but if it may be desired Lawfully, may also be pray'd for; and nothing to be feared, but may be prayed against; and nothing that is uneasy, but we may pray that it may be sanctify'd and remov'd.

And our Liberty in Prayer should be follow'd with observation of the Success of our Prayers, it being certain, God ever answers his People so far as is for their good, and in a time his Wisdom seeth to be best. And this kind of Praying and observing the Success of Prayer, is an inward retired part of Religion. Sobriety, Righteousness and Holy-walking, are in the view of others; but this is one of the *Arcana* of Religion, one of the *Interiora Regni Dei*, one of the Secrets of Piety. A special Instance of this Praying and observing the Success of Prayer,

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we have in Ezra, he had said to the King. The Hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his Power and Wrath is against all them that forsake him. And therefore he was ashamed to require of the King a Band of Soldiers, and Horsemen to help them against the Enemy in the way: Wherefore he proclaimed a Fast to afflict their Souls before God, and to seek him for a right way for them, their little ones and their Substance, Ezra, 8: 21, 22. And he observ'd the Success, v. 23. So we fasted and besought our God for this, and he was entreated for us. Let this be a Pattern for our Imitation; let us pray and observe what Returns are made to our Prayers, that we may be encourag'd upon all Occasions to renew our Addresses to God.

And this Praying and observing the Success of Prayer, may mightily confirm us in the Belief of a God, against all Atheistical Insinuations to the contrary. Suppose one should say, How do you know there is a King upon the Throne in such or such a Nation? Were it not a very sufficient Answer, I presented a Petition to him, and had a Gracious Answer, and my Desire granted me. So may a serious Christian say, I am sure there is a God, having prayed to him, and had many Answers of Prayer, and some in relation to things known only to God and my self. And being settled by such means in the Belief of a God,

no manner of Arguments can take us off from our Faith; having besought God to make his Way straight before us; to guide us in things Prudential, and in things more Difficult, wherein Prudence cannot guide us; and being Answer'd according to our Heart's desire once and again, and often; This is a kind of Demonstration, there is indeed a God Governing the World; and hearing Prayer.

And though Atheistical Men despise such an Argument as this, to a serious Mind it is Considerable and Weighty, to have frequent Answers of Prayer in Kind or in Exchange, presently, or upon waiting, and to be led right in Difficult Cases upon Praying for it.

DISCOURSE

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DISCOURSE IX.

Of the Peoples Duty at Home, when the Army is Abroad.

DEUTERONOMY XXIII. 9.

When the Host goeth forth against thine Enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing.

IN these Words we have our present national Case. A War is commenc'd, and our Host is going forth. And here is Direction how to manage our selves in a time of War. We should now keep our selves from every wicked thing. The Armies Abroad, and the People at Home, should both keep themselves from Impieties and Provocations.

In Times of the profoundest Peace, we should abstain from all manner of Sin and Wickedness; but especially in a time of War, lest the Provocations of our Sins should have an ill Influence upon the Undertakings of the Forces going forth.

1. Here is our present National Case. A War is begun. And some things may be

148 *Of the Peoples Duty at Home,*
observ'd concerning War, that may help us
to be rightly affected with it, and to de-
meanour selves Christianly in it. And

1. War is the Fruit of Sin, a bitter Fruit
of a bitter Root, 1 Jam. 4. 1. *From whence
come Wars and Fightings among you? Can it be
not hence, even of your Lusts, that war in your
Members? Had not Adam sinned, the Earth
had been a quiet Habitation, no War would
have been among Men, no Provocation to
it, no Occasion for it: and probably none
among the Beasts, but the Lion had lien
down with the Lamb, and the Leopard eaten
Straw with the Ox; the whole Earth of Sin
had not entred into it, had been one Ho-
ly Mountain, and no hurting or destroying in
it. But Sin being in the World, the Lusts
of Men make Wars. Ambition, Pride, A-
varice, Anger and Revenge kindle Strife
and War. Men provoke God by their Sins,
and He punisheth them by Wars. They
will not keep Peace with him, and in just
Judgment he suffers not them to be at Peace
with one another. Judges 5. 8. They chose
new Gods. Then was there War in the Gates.
Solomon offended God, and God stirred up
an Adversary against him, 1 Kings 11. 14.
War is one of God's Scourges to chasten
the Impieties of Men, his Blood-letting for
the Feavers of Wickedness. Where there
is no Sin, there is no War. In Heaven there
is all Peace with God and one another. And*

in Hell there is no Peace, but all War, or like War; none pleased, or at ease, all in Discontent, Confusion and Distraction.

Had not Sin come into the World, the whole Earth had been at Quiet, and all Mankind in Union, as some particular Families are, where Love reigns, and no Discord appears, but an Image of Heaven on Earth.

2. War is a great Affliction; wherever it is mov'd, Sorrow attends it. It is a Consumption of Treasure, a Destroyer of the Fruits of the Earth, and makes plenty of Widows and Orphans. Wherever it is, *the Dead are there, and the wounded cry out,* and Sleep is disturb'd, *and pangs take hold of Men as upon Women in Travel.* Even the glorious Successes in it are attended with Mourning: And when a Nation is giving Thanks and Triumphing, many Private Families are watering their Cheeks, and raising up their Mourning. It is at best a severe Remedy, like Cutting off a Finger to save the Hand, or a Hand to preserve the Arm, or the Arm to save the Life. It is very afflicting, and Sadness is the Complexion of its Face, though Laurels flourish on its Head. It is ever follow'd with a crowd of Grievs, and numerous and deep Sorrows.

3. War is Sinful on one Side, generally on the Offensive Side, though not always.

On one Side it is Wicked, viz. the Side that will not yield to Reason and Equity. Might Justice hold the Ballance by Consent, two Kingdoms could not War: In all Strife, one must be in the Fault. Both may; but one must, or the Peace is kept.

4. War is sometimes Sinful on both Sides; as when both make Unjust Demands, or both refuse a Treaty.

5. War is a Judgment upon the Sinful Side, and a Correction on the Just Party. Be the War never so Just on one Side, it is a Correction from God that no other Remedy is left but the Severity of Blood-shedding; and it calls for Humiliation, Confessing of Sins, and Fasting, to which we are call'd this Day.

6. War should not be rashly enterprized, but made with good Advice. The Reasons of it should be Great, and ought to be declared for Satisfaction to the Subjects who maintain the War; to the Armies who adventure their Lives in it, and to the Neighbouring Kingdoms, that the Justice of it may be evident. A Pattern of this we have in the Holy Scriptures. When the King of *Ammon* made War upon *Israel*, he pretended that *Israel* had injuriously taken away his Land from *Arnon* to *Jabbok*, and to *Jordan*, *Judges* 11. 13. But *Jephthah* cleared the matter, shewing *Ammon's* Claim was groundless, in a large Declaration from v. 14. to v. 28.

v. 28. And *Arms* not yielding to Right, the Matter was decided by the Sword. And as for our War, it is grounded upon a breach of Treaty, and is undertaken in Defence of our selves, and our Neighbours, and in Defence of our Religion and Liberties against the encroaching of the Great French Oppressor.

7. We must not in the Justest War depend upon the Riches of our Kingdom, or the Conduct of our Captains, or the Valour of our Soldiers; but in the use of Means, implore the Help of God, who is the Lord of Hosts, and gives the Victory to one side or the other as seemeth good to him.

2. Here is Direction how to manage our selves in a Time of War, *When the Host goeth forth, we should keep our selves from every wicked thing.* This is our Duty at all times, but more especially in a Time of War; as Prayer is always our Duty, but more especially, and more abundantly in a time of Affliction, *Jam. 5. 13.*

Quest. But why should we especially in a Time of War keep our selves from wicked things?

Ans. Because a Time of War, through the sad depravation of Humane Nature, is commonly a time of Licence and Disorder, when both Soldiers Abroad, and People at Home, are apt to think themselves Lawless.

Inter Arma, silent Leges. Of all Men Sol-

diers should be Sober, Righteous, and Holy, and having the Sword in their Hands, should have Grace in their Hearts: They of all Men should be most Circumpect in Deed, Word, and Thought, who March in the Face of Death. But generally they are Careless, and like their Horses, rushing into the Battel, without that prudent Fear that becomes Rational Beings. They should make Peace with God who Fight against Men; and obtain Pardon who draw the Sword; and secure Eternal Life, who thus hazard their Natural Life; but it is very commonly otherwise: And too too commonly People at Home are most Licentious in a time of War, thinking the Government not at leisure to observe and punish their Impieties and Disorders. So that the Words are Cautionary, *Then keep thy self from every wicked thing*; as being then in most Danger of doing wickedly.

2. We should guard against Wickedness especially in a Time of War, because it is a time of Affliction; and in a time of Affliction there ought to be much Mortification and Circumspection, because Sin committed in Affliction, is Sin with much and deep Aggravation. *Ahaz* is branded for this, for sinning in his Distress, 2 *Chron.* 28. 22. Then to transgress when the Rod is upon our Backs, when the Lord is come forth of his

his Place to Punish, when his Hand is lifted up in Judgment, when he appears in Clouds and Darkness, and is casting abroad the Rage of his Wrath, is sinning deeply, in measure heaped up, and running over.

In Times of Affliction and publick Calamity, God loudly calls to Mourning and Lamentation, to Signs and Realities of Mortification and Repentance. And though at any Time it is a Provocation to Steal and Rob, to drink Drunk, to commit Fornication, to Blaspheme, to profane Sabbaths, or the like; yet it is much more heinous to do any of these things in a time of Famine, or in a time of Pestilence, or when the Small-pox rages, or in a time of War, when many Widows and poor Orphans mingle their Drink with Weeping. The mention'd Sins are very bad at any time, but are outrageous in times of publick Mourning, and a Sign the Hearts of Men are extremely hardened. It was certainly an Aggravation of *Zimri's Sin*, that it was committed when *Moses and the Children of Israel were weeping before the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation*, Numb. 25. 16.

3. In a Time of War especially, we should keep our selves from wicked things; because a War puts a Kingdom in Hazard, and may bring a Ruin, a Desolation, a Change of Government, a Loss of Religion, Laws and Liberties. In a time of War
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all is in danger; all that is dear to us lies at stake. And therefore we had need be Cautious, Reserv'd and Mortify'd, and not incense God against us by Riots and Disorders. When Kingdoms are in War, dash one against another, who knows which Vessel shall be broken. *Let not him that putteth on his Harness, boast as he that putteth it off,* 1 Kings 20. 11. Sometimes Victory is on the side of the Fewer and Weaker; and Potent Allies sometimes prove broken Reeds. *Spain* at its own dispose was our Allie; but is now in *French* Hands, and our Enemy. The Issue of War is doubtful to us, though determin'd by God; and not knowing the Event, it becomes us to stand in awe and not Sin; while we attend the Issue, we should not let the Reins loose to Impiety, and provoke God to make our Enemies ride in Triumph over us.

4. In a Time of War, we should keep our selves from wicked things, Because Sin committed in the Land may have a bad Influence upon a particular Expedition, or Battel, or Siege, though, the general Issue of the War may be very Prosperous. *Israel's* War in *Canaan* was in the end very Successful and Glorious, a Conquest according to desire; but the particular Attempt upon *Ai*, at first was very Unsuccessful: *Israel* was smitten before that Town, and shamefully Retreated, flying. And this was

was occasion'd by the Sin of one private Man, *Achan's* Sacrilegiously taking part of *Jericho's* Spoil, that was devoted to God. And thus, though our War may be (as we hope) in the end very Prosperous, yet our Sins may provoke God to send us some Intermediate ill Successes, or to cause us to purchase our Victories at a very dear rate, and to mingle deep Mournings with our Triumphs. It may befall us as it did that King, who being Complemented upon a noble Victory gain'd by his Forces, Answer'd very sensibly, That such another Victory would Undo him. And therefore let us keep our selves in a Time of War from every Wicked thing.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Since we should, especially in Time of War, keep our selves from wicked things, this sheweth who are the best Subjects in the Kingdom, *viz.* the most Mortify'd, Strict and Holy among us; Persons of Real Piety, and having more than a *Form of Godliness*, who by some are scorned and hated.

They who observe strictly the Sabbath, and all the Week live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly; they who Fear God, and fear to sin against Him; they who Crucify the Flesh, and its Lusts and Affections, and order their Conversation as becometh the Gospel.

Gospel; these are the best Subjects in the Kingdom, and though at Home, do great Service in War. They strengthen our Forces in the Field, and upon the Ocean, by drawing down a Blessing from God upon them. An Holy-living, Believing, and Praying *Moses* did a great Service, though not in the Army in Person, *Exod.* 17. 8, &c. And happy are those Princes who can distinguish and judge which are their best Subjects, not turning their Displeasure upon the best of their Guards; the Children and Friends of God, the real Disciples of Christ, Persons of Probity, Zeal and Holiness are surely the best of Subjects in the Kingdom. And the more Ungodly any are, they are so much the worse Servants to the Government. Though Men be wealthy, and contribute much to the defraying the Charge of the War, or though Valiant in their Persons, though Prudent in Conduct, yet if they are Wicked, they are bad Subjects, provoking God against the Kingdom. Blasphemers, and Drunkards, and Adulterers, and Sabbath-breakers, and they that Imprecate Damnation upon themselves or others, and Hypocrites that have only the Form of Godliness, are bad Subjects, and in a time of War provoke God to blast our Armies and Fleets, their Sins crying continually for Vengeance.

Some may pretend highly to Love, Honour, and Serve the Government: But no Man truly doth so, who loveth not God, whose Aid his Prince imploreth. Her Majesty, our very Gracious Queen, hath solemnly declar'd Her Trust is in God, and hath call'd us this Day to Assemble, and Implore his Blessing upon her Arms. And is that Man then a good Subject who indulgeth himself in any Impiety, and provokes God against himself, against the Queen and her People at Home, and her Forces Abroad? Certainly, they that tempt God, do not best Serve the Government.

Caleb and Joshua the two of the Twelve Spies who followed God fully, were the most serviceable in Conquering the Canaanites; whereas one Achan who did wickedly stoppt the Stream of Israel's Victories. Impious Livers are ill Members of Families, Cities and Kingdoms, like the Worm at the root of Jonah's Gourd, Vengeance hovering over their Designs and Actions.

You then who would be good Subjects, and contribute to the Success of the War, labour to be good Men; live in the Fear of God; abstain from Sin of all kinds; and praying for Success, lift up holy Hands to God, and purify'd Hearts.

You profess Allegiance to the Queen, and Renounce her Enemies; Renounce also God's Enemies, the Devil, the World, and

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the Flesh ; and live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly, and so you shall be good Subjects, and Blessings to the *Queen* and the Kingdom.

2. By way of *Exhortation*.

Since it is a Time of War, and the Host is going forth, let us now keep our selves from every wicked thing ; and particularly,

1. From *Intemperance*. Rioting and Drunkenness, are always Wicked things, and contrary to the Light of Nature, and the Holy Scriptures. These things are forbidden in the Scriptures, and Woes are pronounced against them who indulge themselves in them : And the Judgments of God have been often manifested upon them that have allowed themselves in these Impieties. Many have drunk themselves asleep, and slept a perpetual Sleep : Many have fallen in their Drink, and been wounded, yea dy'd. Many impair their Health, and ruin their Estates, and lose their Parts by Intemperance. It is always a very provoking Sin, and ever to be avoided ; but more especially in a time of War, when there is Danger of the Enemies prevailing and spoiling us : Then to run to Excesses when we are in danger of losing Necessaries, is an Aggravation, and makes Intemperance a scarlet flaming Sin. To Drink beyond measure when we know not but that our Enemy may prosper,

per, and we may be made to serve him in Hunger and Thirst, is a mighty Aggravation of the Crime. Let us then keep from this Sin, and live soberly, and not incline to, nor yield to, nor be surpriz'd by so Unchristian, Vile, Shameful, and Unmanly a Vice. Let it be our Abhorrence and evermore odious to us; let that Caution dwell with us, *Not in Rioting and Drunkenness,* Rom. 13. 13.

2. In time of War, let us keep our selves from all Unjust-dealing. This is always a Wicked thing, against the Golden Rule, *As ye would Men should do to you, so do you to them;* and Condemn'd by Natural Light, and deeply threatned in the Holy Scriptures. *Wo to him that builds his Chamber by wrong.* Against such a one the Stone shall cry out of the Wall, and the Beam from the Timber shall answer it. And every Conscience will fear'd is against it. Let us diligently then avoid this Sin, and especially in a Time of War: For if we deal Unjustly with one another, God is provoked to bring an Oppressour over all our Heads in Vengeance for it. All Sins cry for Vengeance on Sinners, and this in particular doth so. 1. Jam. 5. 4. Behold, the Hire of the Labourers, which have reaped down your Fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth. Ahab's Oppression was one of his most Crying Sins, and brought great Judgments upon his Family: And Pha-

Job's Oppression brought Ruin upon him. To deal unjustly, in the open way of Robbing, or in the secret way of Theft, or in the crafty way of Over-reaching, making Wit to serve Wickedness, is a very heinous Sin. And let it be far from us to tread in any of these crooked Ways. And to prevent yielding to Temptations to Unjust Practices, let us mortify Covetousness in the Heart, the Spring moving to Oppressions and Frauds. A Mind greatly contented with its present Portion, is not easily tempted to any Unjust-dealing.

3. Let us in Time of War keep our selves from Sins of the Tongue, as Lying, Slandering, Wanton-speech, Scoffing at Religion, Cursing, wishing Evil to others, wishing them Sick, Diseased, Dead, or in Hell. How very Unchristian, Rude, and Barbarous are such Speeches? As also taking the Name of the Great and Glorious God in vain, and Swearing, Blaspheming, and calling for Damnation?

These are dreadful Sins and Provocations at all times, and in this; you that take these liberties are ill Members of a Family, of a Village, of a County, of a Kingdom, and sad Helpers in a VVar. Lay your Hands upon your Mouths, and stop your Breath when you are about to utter Evil-speeches; and fear lest God should strike Dumb that Tongue, that is so ill employed to his great dishonour.

4. Let

4. Let us especially in a Time of War, keep our selves from the Pollutions and Uncleanesses of Fornication, Adultery, Incest, and all other Sins contrary to the Seventh Command, and live in strict Chastity, and possess our Vessels, our Bodies, in Sanctification and Honour; and not in the Lusts of Concupiscence, as the Gentiles that know not God. These Sins are mighty contrary to Christianity, very Shameful, and have been signally punish'd. Thousands in Israel were slain in one Day for committing Fornication with the Daughters of Moab: And Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown by Fire and Brimstone for an Unnatural Uncleaness. Flee Fornication, saith the Apostle, for every other Sin, is comparatively without the Body, but he that committeth Fornication sinneth against his own Body. And he that committeth Adultery, saith Solomon, lacketh Understanding. And in Times of War to wallow in Filthiness, when the Forces are in the Field, and the Providence of God calls to the closest Mortification, is most deeply provoking. Keep your selves from the least of this Vice. Stop the Approaches to it, wanton Songs, Speeches, and Thoughts, and Glances of the Eye.

5. In a Time of War let us keep our selves from neglecting the Duties of Divine Worship, as Reading the Scriptures, and Scriptural Books, Hearing the Word

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preached, and Prayer. Such Neglects are very offensive to God, and particularly the neglecting of Prayer. Not to call upon him by Secret and Family Prayer, provokes him to pour out his Anger. To have our Closets and Houses Prayerless, especially in a Time of War; to have our Host Abroad, and not follow it with our Prayers, is very provoking, and may bring ill Success. You that enter not Daily into your Closets to seek and supplicate God; you that can rise in the Morning and not bend your Knees to God in solemn Prayer for Pardon, Grace, Mercy and Protection; you that can lie down at Night without waiting on God with Solemn Address; you that can let your Families go without calling Daily upon his Name, you are always; and especially at this Time no good Subjects. You hinder the Kingdom, and help the Enemy by your sinful Neglects, and provoking Sins of Omission.

6. Let us, especially in Time of War keep our selves from the Sin of Lying. This was nam'd among the Sins of the Tongue. But needeth a more particular Admonition that it may most industriously be shund. This Sin of Lying is a great Abomination to the God of Truth, and an Imitation of Satan the Lying Spirit, a most pernicious thing in Society, and yet common and much prevailing. And so much Mischief comes by

this Sin, that it were well for Liars, and them that have suffer'd by them, if their Lips had been sealed. Set your selves against this base Sin. And you that Govern Families, strictly Admonish your Children and Servants to shun and abhor Lying, and mind them often of the Judgment upon *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, not only for Sacrilege, but also for Lying.

7. In Time of War, Let us keep our selves from the Sins of Discord, Variance, and Hating one another. These are great Sins against the Second great Command, and all the urgent Admonitions in Scripture to Love and Charity. And let these Sins especially be avoided in this time of the Contending of Nations, lest contending Persons or Parties provoke God to give us up into the Hands of a Common Enemy, and learn us in Prisons and Banishment to love and bear with one another, as the holy *Ridley* and *Hooper* were taught in the days of the Burning Q. M. Christianity always calleth to Union and Love: And in a Time of War Policy invites to Union, that we may not weaken our selves, and encourage the Enemy. Though we cannot accord altogether in Opinion and Judgment, let us yet agree by Love and mutual Forbearance.

8. In a Time of War let us keep our selves from Pride. Pride is a common Sin, and works very variously. Some pride it in

Cloaths, some in Wealth, some in Beauty, some in Honour, some in Parts and Learning, some in Friends, some in Strength, some in Moral Vertue, some in Gifts, and some in Grace, But let us shun it in all the ways of it, and watch and pray against it, and walk humbly with God, lest the Enemy should prevail, and pluck all our Plumes, and bring us to embrace a Dunghill.

9. In a Time of War let us keep our selves from Scorning, Reproaching, and Reflecting upon Religion and the Power of Godliness, lest the Enemy should prevail, and not only Religion, but even the Form of it should come under Persecution. Should God give us into our Enemies Hand, and a Deputy *King* be put over us, our *Forms* must depart, and the *Masse* become the State and modish way of Worship among us.

10. In a Time of War, let us keep our selves from the Sin of Lazy Formality in Divine Worship; a being only at Reading, Confession of Sin, Prayer and Sermon, *as the manner of some is*, without any appearance of Seriousness: How few manage Solemnly in God's Service! How few Confess humbly, Pray fervently, and Hear the Divine Word Affectionately! Some bring only their Bodies to the Service of God, and come only in Custom, evermore glad of the Conclusion of God's Service, finding not a perfect Freedom in it. This Formality is

a great Sin, and much offensive to the Heart-searching God, and makes our Sacrifices an Abomination, and provokes him to strengthen our Enemies. Let then the mention'd, and all other Sins be shun'd in order to the bringing down a Blessing on *Her Majesty's* Arms, that our Forces may be Valiant and Successful, in this Just and Necessary War.

Quest. And what more should we do for the *Queen's* Honour and our Safety, and the Continuance of our Religion and Liberties.

Answ. Let us add fervent Prayer, and earnest Supplication. A Popish *Queen* of *Scotland* own'd, She was more afraid of the Prayers of one of the *Protestant* Ministers, than of a Band of Armed Men,

Prayer Serious, fervent, and Importunate, may do much in our Case. A *Moses* with Hands and Heart lifted up to God upon the Hill, helped *Joshua* in the Valley to overcome *Amalek*. You may in your Closets, and Families, and in the Church give a Blow to the Enemy, and bring a Victory to the Army upon the Wings of Prayer. Wherefore every one of you apply your selves to Prayer, and so come to the Help of the Lord against the Mighty.

And as moving to this; Consider how much we are Concern'd in the Success of this War. Our Estates Little and Great, our *English* Liberties, and our *Protestant* Religion, are all gone if we should be at

the Mercy of the Enemy we Contend with. We and *Holland* are Engaged in this War for the Preservation of our Selves, and the *Protestant* Interest. And therefore let us Pray much and fervently.

And moreover, besides keeping our selves from wicked things, and Praying for good Success; let us in our Places endeavour to keep others from wicked things. Magistrates should employ their Power to suppress Sin, and Charge Under-Officers to do the like, and encourage them in it. Ministers should zealously Reprove Sin, and denounce the Judgments of God against it, and perswade Sinners to turn from their sinful Ways. Family-Governours should keep their Families to their power in a due Christian Order, discouraging Sin, and promoting Godliness in their Houses. And if these things are neglected, Sin will grow upon us. And certainly the Debauches and Impieties found among us, may be imputed especially to the Carelessness of many Family-Governours, who neglect all good Order in their Houses, and are an evil Example in them. And if ever Religion recover Life and Zeal among us, it must be by Men of *Joshua's* Spirit and Temper, Men resolving that they and their Houses shall serve the Lord.

DISCOURSE X.

Of Family-Religion, or Blessing the House.

I CHRON. XVI. 43.

And David returned to Bless his House.

BY *David's House* may be understood, both his Habitation, and his Family. And by Blessing his House must be meant some Religious Act in or toward his House. And hence may be observed, That it is the Duty of Family-Governours to Bless their Houses and Families. And

I. Their Houses or Habitations so far as they are capable of being Bles'd, *i. e.* Relatively. And

I. Family-Governours should Bless their Habitations or Dwellings, by not permitting Sin, Vice, and Wickedness in them, at least by not permitting Sin unpunished, or unreprieved in them. It is a sort of Curse upon, and a Pollution in an House, to have vicious Things done, or impious Speeches spoken in it. Inanimate things are cursed

by being employed to a sinful Use, *Dent. 7, 25. The graven Images of their Gods shall ye burn with fire: Thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an Abomination to the Lord thy God.* By being employed to a sinful Use, the Silver and Gold became an Abomination to God, and a *Cursed thing*, v. 26. So if an House be a place of Oaths and Drunkenness, or Cursing, or Sabbath-breaking, or Wantonness, the House is an Abomination to God, and a Cursed Thing. One way then for a Family-Governour to bless his House, is to prevent the Practice of Impiety there, and if it slips in, to Reprove it, and if that prevail not, to Punish it. For in an Habitation where Impiety is Tolerated, there Satan dwells by permission as Proprietor, and the House becomes his, a Resort for him, and other Apostate Spirits; and so is under a Curse.

2. Family-Governours should Bless their Houses by performing Holy Duties in them, as Reading, especially the Scriptures, Prayer, Thanksgiving, and Exhortations to Godliness. Such Exercises Bless an House, and spiritually Perfume it, and make it a Little *Oratory* or *Temple*. Of such an House God saith as of *Zion*, *Psal. 132. 14. This is my Rest for ever: Here will I dwell, for I have desired it:* Such an House may be termed a *Bethel*.

Bethel, an House of God: and there may be written upon it *Jehovah Shammah*, the Lord is there. An House in which is the Sound of serious Reading and Prayer daily, is Blest, being employed to the best Use.

3. Family-Governours should Bless their Houses, by taking due Care of the *Sabbath* to sanctifie it, that the Houses may enjoy their *Sabbaths*. The Land of *Israel* is said to enjoy her *Sabbaths* in the time of *Israel's* Captivity, being then quiet and not Polluted by Profaning the Days of Holy Rest, *Levit. 26. 34*. In like manner when the Family-Governour takes Care the *Sabbath* may be duly observed, the House it self may be said to enjoy a *Sabbath*.

4. Family-Governours should Bless their Houses by Committing them to God by Prayer, that they may be under his Protection. So Parents Bless their Children by Praying that God would Bless them. And Houses needing the Protection of God, it is mighty needful to Implore him to defend and secure them.

The Fire may devour them. The Winds may overturn them. An Earthquake may undermine them. Thieves may break in and spoil them. And being thus exposed to Danger, it is very necessary to put them under the Wing of God by Faith and Prayer,

er, that He may keep our Houses. And this is Blessing them.

5. Another way of Family-Governours Blessing their Houses is to dedicate in their Houses themselves to God, to his Service, and Glory. When a Family-Governour gives himself to the Lord, solemnly devotes himself to be his faithful Servant, to deny Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and to live Soberly and Righteously and Godly, and this in his House, the House is in a sort a Witness of it, and Bled by it.

6. Another way of Blessing the House is for the Governour to dedicate the House to God; if hired, then for the time in it to devote it to God, in a Resolution therein to serve and Honour God, and in a Purpose to endeavour He may not be dishonoured there. *David* did something like this, *Psal. 101. 2.* When he not only resolved to *behave himself wisely in a Perfect way*, but also to *walk within his House with a perfect heart.*

Thus Bless your Houses, and God will dwell in them, and Holy Angels resort to them.

7. Another way to Bless an House, is to speak in it of things serious Divine and Holy. This makes an House a School of Righteousness, and as a Colledge of the Sons of the Prophets.

What an happy Place was the Garden in *Geth.*

Gethsemane, where our Lord and his Disciples discours'd together of the things of the Kingdom of God? And how happy (according to its Capacity) was that upper Room, *Acts* 1. 13. upon the like Account?

8. Another way of Blessing an House is by offering Praise and Thanksgiving to God in it. That House is Blest, where the Praises of God the Creator, Redeemer and Comforter are often heard. Could Walls speak, they would glory in being thus Consecrated to the Lord of the whole Earth.

2. Family-Governours should Bless their Families or Households. And this they should do.

1. By Teaching them the good and the right Way, instructing them in the things of their Peace, putting them upon reading the Scripture and Scriptural Books, and hearing the Word preached; by examining their Knowledge, and Catechising them in the Principles of *Christian* Religion.

It was an Happiness to the *Eunuch* to be Catechized by *Philip*, *Act*. 8. 30. and to *Apollo* when *Aquila* and *Priscilla* instructed him in the Way of the Lord more perfectly, *Acts* 18. 26. So when Family-Governours examine the Knowledge of their Families, and Expound (according to their Capacity) the things of Religion to them, they Bless them, and give them occasion to Bless God for such Governours.

And

And they who leave their Families uninstructed, instead of Blessing their Families, bring a Curse upon themselves and their Families.

2. Family-Governours should Bless their Families, by Commanding them to be Holy and Religious, charging them to humble themselves, and pray, and turn from their Evil ways: So did *Abraham* the Father of the Faithful, and the Friend of God, *Gen.* 18. 19. *I know him, that he will Command his Children, and his Household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and Judgment.* They Bless their Families who command and strictly charge them to shun all Vice Impiety and Wickedness, and to perform the Holy Duties of daily Reading, and Prayer, in due and serious manner; and to Repent, Believe in Christ, and walk in Holiness: Solemnly to insist in Charging those things upon them, is one considerable way of Blessing a Family.

3. Family-Governours should Bless their Families by daily performing Divine Worship with them; offering Morning and Evening Sacrifices of Prayer and Praise. And they who neglect these things have their Families exposed to their Spiritual Enemies, the Devil, World, -and Flesh. When a Family is orderly gathered together Morning and Evening, to hear God speaking in the Scriptures to them, to Bow together before Him,

Him, and confels and pray to him, A Family-Governour doth something toward Blessing his Family. But when Families meet only to work or to eat together, this is no more than their Cattle do.

But it may be Objected, this Reading and Praying is Church work. I answer it is true. And every Christian Family is a little Church, *Ecclesia*, a Number called out of the World to own and worship God. As a Christian Nation in the whole is separated to God from the Heathen World, so all the Families of it are separated from the Families in Heathen Nations to Worship God as Families, and are encouraged to do it daily by the Word of our Lord in *Mat. 18. 20. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* But withall Care must be taken that praying Families be sober and Righteous, and that Family-Prayer be not preceded or followed with any Impieties and Disorders.

4. Family-Governours should Bless their Families by encouraging Piety and Godliness in them, by cherishing good inclinations in their Households.

In the Form of Blessing the People in *Numb. 6.* those Words are very remarkable, *ver. 24, 25, 26. The Lord Bless thee, the Lord make his Face to shine upon thee, the Lord lift up his Countenance upon thee, or smile, or look*

look pleasantly upon thee, encourage thee. And Family-Governours should thus Bless their Families, making their Faces to shine upon them that are religiously inclin'd in their Families, encouraging them to continue and grow in Goodness. And the more forward the more strict and Holy any are in their Families, the more should the Governours encourage them. Let the most Religious in your Families have most of your Esteem. Thus did Jacob. Joseph was most Religious among his Children. And him He esteem'd most highly. And in Abraham's Family Eliezer was the most Religious Servant, and the most favoured and trusted.

5. Family-Governours should Bless their Families by reprov'g Sin in them. So did Eli, though he fail'd in the measure, and suffer'd deeply for not Reprov'g his Profane Sons more sharply. Thus did Jacob, he Reprov'd Simeon and Levi deeply, Gen. 34. 30. *Ye have troubled me, to make me stink among the Inhabitants of the Land.* And when dying he reflected sharply upon them, Gen. 49. 5, 6, 7. *Simeon and Levi are Brethren: Instruments of Cruelty are in their Habitations. O my Soul, come not thou into their Secret, unto their Assembly, mine Honour be not thou united: For in their Anger they slew a Man, and in their Self-will they digged down a Wall. Cursed be their Anger, for it was fierce; and their Wrath, for it was cruel.*

cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. To Reprove Sin mildly or sharply, according as Wisdom shall direct, and keep Discipline in a Family, is one Way of keeping off a Curse, and bringing a Blessing upon a Family.

6. Family-Governours should Bless their Families by secret Prayer for them, for their Conversion, or Progress in Holiness and Godliness, by bearing them upon their Hearts in their Closets, and laying them before the Throne of Grace. *When the Days of their Feasting were gone about, Job sent and sanctified his Children, offering Burnt-Offerings according to the number of them.* And Prayer no doubt, attended his Sacrifices, *Job. 1. 5.* And though this were a Family-Service, yet something may be drawn from it Instructive to Family-Governours, to offer Sacrifices of Prayers for their Families in secret, and to plead with God for them in their Closets.

7. Family-Governours should Bless their Families, by observing and minding them of Providential Dispensations.

As when Sicknes is among them, or Health enjoy'd in a Sickly-time; or when Death is in the House, or Prosperity within the Walls; these things should be observ'd, and suitable Instructions, Admonitions, Exhortations, and Consolations be given according to the Governour's Capacity

ty more or less. In all these Ways, Family-Governours should Bless their Families.

Quest. But why should Family-Governours thus Bless their Houses, and Families?

Ans. 1, Because it is their Duty. The Examples of *Abraham, Joshua, and David* lead to it. And concerning Instructing of Children, there is an expresse Command to Teach them, *Deut. 6. 6, 7. And these Words which I Command thee this Day, shall be in thine Heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy Children; or whet or sharpen them upon thy Children; and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the Way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.* And in *Ephes. 6. 4. Ye Fathers provoke not your Children to wrath: but bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.* And other things, as Praying with, and for Families, and Encouraging them in Piety and Godliness, and Reproving Sin in them, are included in *bringing them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.* And even the Light of Nature teaches Family-Governours in some measure to Bless their Houses and Families, by preventing Impiety in them, and by performing some Religious Service in them.

The Heathens had their Household Gods and Worship. And Nature teaches to Pray for the Preservation of our Houses, and to have some Religious Order in Families.

lies. It is not a Work of Supererogation, but a Duty to Bless our Houses and Families. This the Lord requireth of Family-Governours.

2. Family-Governours should thus Bless their Houses and Families, because this is the way to bring the Blessing of God upon their Houses and Families. Would you have God Bless your Habitations and Families? Surely you would. Then do the mention'd things, that you may prevent the flying Roul, the Curse from coming into your Houses, and upon your Children and Servants, and that the Blessing of the Blessed God may be upon all.

3. Family-Governours should thus Bless their Houses and Families, because the Neglect of it may bring a Curse on themselves, upon them and theirs, even upon their Blessings. So God threatneth, *Mal. 2. 2. I will Curse your Blessings.* God can make your Table a Snare; your Health, Wealth, and Friends a Snare: And you provoke him to it, if you omit to Bless your Houses and Families.

4. Family-Governours should thus Bless their Houses and Families, because they must account with God for them, and how they have manag'd in them. God hath order'd your Times, and the Bounds of your Habitations; and your Houses and Families are Talents, and an Account must be rendered to the Great Lord concerning them.

and therefore you had need thus Bless your Houses and Families.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. By way of Reproof.

Some (Unhappy and Unholy they) do not Bless their Houses, do not keep Impiety out, but bring it into their Houses, and encourage it there, making their Houses Dens of Thieves, or Cages of Unclean Birds, or Styes of Gluttony and Drunkenness, Habitations for Satan, Resorts for Evil Angels. Some Houses are polluted with Oaths and Curses, and other Impieties tolerated in them. Others though not so deeply defiled, yet are not Consecrated to God by Reading, Prayer, and Thanksgiving. And how worthy of sharp Reproof are the Governours in such Houses? They lay an ill Foundation for the time to come.

They also must be Reprov'd who do not Bless their Families, who neglect to Instruct or Catechize their Families, never Examining their Knowledge, nor Commanding them to be Religious; unconcern'd whether they be Holy or Profane; not Reading, nor Praying in their Families; not encouraging Goodness, but the contrary; not reproving Sin, not Praying for their Families. You that are guilty of these are in evil Case. The Lord open your Eyes, touch

touch your Consciences, break and melt your Hearts, and bring you to Repentance, *that Iniquity may not be your Ruin.*

2. By way of Exhortation to Family-Governours. Bless your Houses and Families: For God requires it, and the Omission of it is perilous; and dying, or immediately after it, you will wish you had Blest your Houses and Families; and for the neglect of it, your Families will rise up in Judgment against you. But if you Bless them, God will be pleased, and Bless you, and your Families will Bless you, and God for you; some of them at least will do so. Also the Remembrance of having Blest your Families will be very pleasing in a Dying Hour, and God will everlastingly Reward it. Be then prevail'd with to Bless your Houses and Families in the mention'd ways, and implore of God to incline and enable you thereunto. Be grieved for former Neglects, and neglect this Duty no more; and make no delay in this Matter; in Compassion to your Families set your selves to Bless them.

Look upon your Children and Servants, and consider they must Die; and having Immortal Souls must pass an Account with God, and go into an Eternity. Look upon them, and let your Eye affect your Heart. Behold them with Tenderness, saying, Should I not do something, or something more for these Immortal, Precious

and therefore you had need thus Bless your Houses and Families.

IMPROVEMENT.

I. By way of Reproof.

Some (Unhappy and Unholy they) do not Bless their Houses, do not keep Impiety out, but bring it into their Houses, and encourage it there, making their Houses Dens of Thieves, or Cages of Unclean Birds, or Styres of Gluttony and Drunkenness, Habitations for Satan, Resorts for Evil Angels. Some Houses are polluted with Oaths and Curses, and other Impieties tolerated in them. Others though not so deeply defiled, yet are not Consecrated to God by Reading, Prayer, and Thanksgiving. And how worthy of sharp Reproof are the Governours in such Houses? They lay an ill Foundation for the time to come.

They also must be Reprov'd who do not Bless their Families, who neglect to Instruct or Catechize their Families, never Examining their Knowledge, nor Commanding them to be Religious; unconcern'd whether they be Holy or Profane; not Reading, nor Praying in their Families; not encouraging Goodness, but the contrary; not reproofing Sin, not Praying for their Families. You that are guilty of these are in evil Case. The Lord open your Eyes, touch

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Look upon your Children and Servants, and consider they must Die; and having Immortal Souls must pass an Account with God, and go into an Eternity. Look upon them, and let your Eye affect your Heart. Behold them with Tenderness, saying, Should I not do something, or something more for these Immortal, Precious

Souls, each of them of more worth than a World ? Shall they perish under my Government, by my Neglect, and drop into Everlasting Misery for want of Teaching, Prayer, Discipline, and Admonition ? Shall I not endeavour their Salvation ? Shall I let them cry against me upon a Dying-Bed or at Judgment ? Shall they say, any of them, Unhappy I the Child of an Irreligious Parent ; or Unhappy I, that I was Servant to an Ungodly Master ! Prevent this by Blessing your Families. Otherwise, though full of Natural Affections, your Hearts are hardened against your Families. You may at once be Indulgent and Cruel ; and the more Indulgent, the more Cruel.

3. *To Families under Governours who Bless them.*

You Children and Servants who are under Religious Family-Governours, Consent to be Blest. Be not uneasy under Reading, Prayer, Admonition, and Examination ; count it an Happiness and Priviledge, and not a Burden or Confinement, to be in an House of Religious Order and Government.

It is very sad when Family-Governours in the Conscience of their Duty, in Love to God, in tender Compassion to Souls, Teach, Admonish, and Pray with their Families, and their Families or some among them dislike these things, come unwillingly to them, shew

shew Weariness in them, and praise the sinful Liberties in Ill-govern'd Families. But God can support under this heavy Pressure. And Wo to such Children and Servants: It will sooner or later wound their Spirits, and cut them to the Heart to remember the Opportunities and Priviledges they had, and despised, and were uneasy under.

4. *To them who may choose what Families they may live in.*

You to whom God indulgeth a Choice of what Families you will live in, choose to live under Governours who Bless their Houses and Families, and not under them where nothing may be expected but a Curse far want of Religion.

To choose to live in a Wicked Family, to be unconcern'd whether the Family be *Po-pish* or *Protestant*, Pious or Atheistical, is a Sign of no Religion in the Chooser. On the other hand, to choose to live in a Family of Religious Order, and where Godliness is promoted, and for that Reason, is a Sign of Piety, or at least of being not far from the Kingdom of God.

5. *To Family-Governours who Bless their Houses and Families.*

God knows you, as he did *Abraham*, observes you in all your ways of Blessing your Houses and Families, and approves you, and takes pleasure in you, and will reward your Labour of Love; you are the Blessed of the

the Lord, and shall be his in the Day he makes up his Jewels; you shall enter into Peace, and there is laid up for you a Crown of Righteousness. Hold on your way, and know *your Labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

6. *To Family-Governours in General.*

Let me recommend to you all, the Practice of Blessing your Families and Houses, by being Religious Family-Governours, and that by observing to you these things.

1. Religious Family-Governours are the best Neighbours, as not provoking God against the Neighbourhood : Whereas VVicked Family-Governours provoke God to bring evil on themselves, and them that dwell nigh them. And Religious Family-Governours not only do not provoke God against the Neighbourhood, but help to stop Judgments, and bring Blessings upon their Neighbours. VVhile *Lot* was in *Sodom*, the Flames were kept from destroying the City.

2. Religious Family-Governours are the best Members in a Christian Congregation. For they prepare themselves and their Families to VVorship God in the Publick Solemnities in a due manner. They Teach and Urge their Families to a comely Demeanour in the Service of God, and to Pray fervently, and Hear the VVord attentively, seriously and profitably. On the other hand, Irreligious Family-Governours are very bad Members

Members in a Christian Congregation, they and their Families coming only in Custom, with no Preparation to the Service of God, with no Seriousness, no Revering God.

3. Religious Family-Governours are the best Subjects in a Kingdom. They as *Moses* stand in the Gap to turn away Wrath. The Incense offered in their Houses, helps to keep off sad Judgments, and to bring down many Blessings upon the Nation.

Lastly, By way of Lamentation.

Jeremy took up a Wailing for the Mountains, and for the Habitations of the Wilderness a Lamentation, Jerem. 9. 10. In like manner I may take up a Lamentation for many Houses in *England*, Great and Small, as not being Blest.

How many Houses in *England* are Prayerless, and without any thing of Family-Religion in them, without any Speech of God, or Christ, or the Holy Spirit, unless in a profane or scornful way? How many Houses instead of being Blest, are made Accursed by the sad Impieties committed in them? Unhappy Dwellings and Habitations, Receptacles for Impure Spirits, Resorts for the Devil and his Angels. And sad it is that Wood, or Brick, or Stone should be thus polluted, and made to serve the Devil's Interest.

And how many Families in *England* are Unblest, not having Governours like *Abraham* and *Joshua*, concern'd to have Religion in their Families; but Governours neglecting Family-Instruction and Prayer, and giving sad Examples to their Families. Some come home to their Families laden with Wine or Strong Drink, Raging, Cursing, Blaspheming, calling for Damnation upon themselves and others. Unhappy Families! Unhappy Children and Servants! whose Gover-

Governours lead the way to Hell, and are in Confederacy with the Prince of Darkness to bring their Families to Ruin and Destruction ! Suppose a Man Covenanting with the Devil in a formal Treaty, what could he say or promise more agreeable than this ? I will not be Religious my self, nor promote Religion in my Family. I will never Instruct nor Admonish them to be Holy : I will give them the Irreligious Example of taking the Name of God in vain, of Swearing in Passion, of being Intemperate, of profaning Sabbaths, and of scorning Godliness. Will not Satan soon sign upon such Articles, and own the Man is his Ally and Confederate ?

Now if Family Governours are thus Resolv'd, though the Formality of the Devil's appearing, and the signing a Contract with Blood be wanting, it is in effect the same thing, and they are real Confederates with Satan : And only two Sorts are above and beyond them in Impiety, viz. Princes and Magistrates like *Jeroboam* who made *Israel* to sin, and Priests like *Hophni* and *Phineas*, who by their Lewdness, make the People abhor the Offerings and Service of God. Next to these in Wickedness are Irreligious Family-Governours. And O that there were none such in *England*, and that all Family-Governours would set themselves to Bless their Houses and Families.



F I N I S.